United Nations A/56/PV.45

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

45th plenary meeting
Saturday, 10 November 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Address by General Pervez Musharraf, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President and Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

General Pervez Musharraf, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf, President and Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Musharraf (Pakistan): I would like to extend to you, Mr. President, my felicitations on your election. I also wish to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his stewardship of the millennium session of the General Assembly. Deep appreciation is also due to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his untiring efforts to translate the vision of the Millennium Declaration into policies and actions by the world community.

Mr. Secretary-General, please also accept my heartiest congratulations on the award of the centenary Nobel Peace Prize conferred upon you and your Organization, and on your election for a second term to your prestigious office.

Last year, at the Millennium Summit, all of us were looking forward to a renaissance in the new millennium — a renaissance in the hearts and minds of people, for a better world where peace and justice would prevail. Unfortunately, today we gather against the sombre backdrop of the terrorist outrage that the world witnessed in shock and horror on that fateful day of 11 September. In seconds, images of fire and death reached all of us around the globe. Thousands of innocent lives were lost in minutes. Eighty or more nations lost some of their brightest and their best. Pakistan, like the rest of the world, mourned the colossal loss of innocent lives. The map of the world changed, and the entire globe descended into a deep crisis. At a time of such great turmoil, when there is a need for clear thought and firm action, I come from Pakistan with a message of determination and resolve as well as a message of peace for all peoples.

The General Assembly meets this year under the shadow of a horrendous act of terror perpetrated against the people of the United States — an act for which no grievance or cause can ever be a justification, an act that must be condemned unambiguously and in the strongest words. This was an attack on humanity itself and we all must therefore unite to fight this scourge. Pakistan has followed words with actions.

Now that the world has committed itself to fight against terrorism, it is time for introspection. In this dark hour, we owe it to posterity to shed light on some dangerous and growing trends, misconceptions and misperceptions which, if not countered, may lead the world into even greater disorder and disharmony.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

01-63188 (E)

Muslims in various parts of the world, and the religion of Islam itself, are being held responsible for the trials the world is facing. This point of view is totally misplaced. Just as all religions teach peace and love for fellow beings, so Islam places upon its adherents the obligation to do good, to be generous, merciful, kind and just to all fellow beings. The Muslim greeting "Assalam alaikum", meaning "Peace be with you", symbolizes the very essence of the Islamic faith. Islam is a religion of peace, compassion and tolerance.

Terrorism is not a Christian, Buddhist, Jewish or Muslim belief. It is to be condemned no matter who the perpetrator, be it an individual, a group or a state.

We need to ask ourselves what really causes these extreme acts around the world. To my mind, it is unresolved political disputes: disputes in Bosnia, Kosovo, Palestine, Kashmir and other places. Unfortunately, all these disputes involve Muslims and, what is more sad, Muslims happen to be the victims in all of them. This fact tends to give a religious tinge to these otherwise political disputes. The lack of progress in resolving them has created in Muslims a sense of deprivation, hopelessness and powerlessness.

The frustration grows even worse when disputes like those relating to Kashmir and Palestine, which have been the subject of Security Council resolutions, remain unsettled. The question then becomes, are the people asking for their rights in accordance with United Nations resolutions to be called terrorists, or are the countries refusing to implement United Nations resolutions perpetrators of State terrorism? In Kashmir, Indian occupation forces have killed over 75,000 Kashmiris, attributing these killings to foreign terrorists. It is time that India stopped such deceit. United Nations Security Council resolutions on Kashmir must be implemented.

Media images of the Palestinian child, Mohammed Al-Durra, were etched into the hearts and minds of people all over the world. It is perverse to regard the rape of Kashmiri women as a punishment inflicted in the course of war. The images of those moments when the World Trade Centre towers came down will remain definitive for all the agony, disbelief and loss that people suffer from acts of terror all over the world. All forms of terror must be condemned, prevented and fought against, but in condemning them the world must not trample upon the genuine rights, aspirations and urges of the people who are fighting for their liberation and are subjected to State terrorism.

To fight the extremist, deprive him of his motivation. The extremist survives in an environment where millions suffer injustice and indignity. Deprive him of his support by giving all the peoples of the world peace, security, justice and dignity, regardless of faith, religion or creed.

A just and honourable solution for the people of Kashmir and an end to the miseries of the people of Palestine are the major burning issues that have to be addressed vigorously, boldly, imaginatively and urgently. We must get to the root causes; cosmetic solutions will only make matters worse. Consider the analogy of a tree: terrorists are like so many leaves — take out some, and there will be plenty more, an unending growth. Terrorist networks are branches: prune a few, and there will be others, and further growth. The only way to do deal with them is to go for the roots. Eliminate the roots, and there will be no tree. The roots are the causes, which need to be addressed, tackled and eliminated, fairly, justly and honourably, so as to give people back their dignity, self-respect and honour.

In essence, therefore, to tackle the issue of terrorism in its entirety, we need to follow a three-pronged strategy of going for individual terrorists; moving against terrorist organizations; and addressing disputes throughout the world in a just manner.

After the events of 11 September, Pakistan took a deliberate, principled decision to join the world coalition in its fight against terrorism. This decision has catapulted us, once again, into the position of being a front-line State in the battle against terrorism. While the people of Pakistan have accepted this new reality, they still suffer from a sense of betrayal and abandonment as a result of being left in the lurch in 1989 after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Then, too, we were a front-line State — and what we got in return was 3 million refugees, a shattered economy, drugs and a Kalashnikov culture, to be dealt with single-handedly and through our own limited resources. Pakistan only hopes that the mistakes of the past will not be repeated and that Pakistan's legitimate concerns will be addressed. Our economy again faces a crisis from the fallout from the operations in Afghanistan. We need financial and commercial

support on an urgent basis, and hope that this will be forthcoming.

After the events of 11 September, and after Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda became an international issue, Pakistan tried its utmost, up to the last moment, to work with the Afghan Government so as to avert military action in Afghanistan. Regrettably, we did not meet with success, and the coalition operation against terrorists in Afghanistan continues, with no immediate end in sight. Sadly, the civilian casualties resulting from this action are increasingly depicted as an open war against the already poor, suffering and innocent people of Afghanistan. The world in general, and Pakistan in particular, mourn the loss of these innocent lives, and sympathize with the bereaved. It is desirable that the military operation be as short and as accurately targeted as possible. It is also essential that a fall-back political strategy be evolved which could attain the same objectives as those being sought through military application.

In its entirety, dealing with Afghanistan involves a three-pronged strategy to address military, political and humanitarian-cum-rehabilitation issues. It must remain the effort of the coalition, after achieving its military objectives, to prevent a vacuum leading to anarchy, through the immediate application of joint political and rehabilitation strategies.

In our view, the political set-up in Afghanistan must be home-grown and not imposed — and I say that having knowledge of the Afghan psyche. We must ensure the unity and territorial integrity of Afghanistan, within a broad-based, multi-ethnic dispensation, representative of the demographic composition of the country.

The people of Afghanistan have been suffering the ravages and devastation of conflict for over two decades. It is the moral obligation of the world community to support them generously. Assistance to Afghanistan should be in two forms: first, ongoing humanitarian assistance; and secondly, post-military operations, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

To offset the ill-effects of the ongoing military operation, it is imperative that we launch a more coordinated and concerted humanitarian relief effort inside and outside Afghanistan, with more generous funding. This will go a long way to alleviating the sufferings of the common Afghan.

It is equally important that we, concurrently, formulate a post-operation rehabilitation programme for when peace returns to Afghanistan. This effort would entail, at the minimum, the restoration of water-management systems; the revival of agriculture through land development; the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure — roads, buildings and utilities; and the establishment of institutions.

A stable and peaceful Afghanistan is in the vital interests of the region and, in particular, of Pakistan. Conditions must be created for the more than 3 million refugees in Pakistan to return to their country. We propose the establishment of an "Afghan trust fund", under United Nations auspices, for the rehabilitation and reconstruction effort.

I would now like to focus on the harsh realities in the developing countries, which have a relationship with extremism of all kinds. Poverty and deprivation lead to frustration, making the masses vulnerable to exploitation by extremist organizations. It is the collective moral responsibility of the developed world to address this issue squarely, through substantive economic uplift, poverty alleviation and social action programmes in the developing countries. Economic imbalances have to be removed in order to achieve a just, equitable and harmonious world order. A major step in this direction would be to reduce, if not eliminate, the debt burden, which hangs like a millstone around the necks of the poor and the underdeveloped.

The bigger tragedy of the third world is that their rulers, together with their minions, plunder their countries' wealth and are afforded easy access to safe havens to stash away the loot in the first world. Restrictions have long been imposed on the laundering of drug money, and the money supply for terrorists is being choked off. Why can similar restrictions not be imposed on the money-laundering of loot?

I appeal, through this forum, to all of the developed countries to legislate against deposits of ill-gotten money, to assist in investigating the looters and to ensure the early return of the plundered wealth to its countries of origin. In fact, I would not be far off the mark if I were to state that, with the return of this looted money, many of the developing countries might be able to pay back their debts and revive their economies.

Pakistan is deeply conscious of the nuclear dimension of the security environment of our region, the danger it poses and the responsibility it places on nuclear-weapon States, particularly the two nuclear States in South Asia. We are ready to discuss how Pakistan and India can create a stable South Asian security mechanism through the peaceful resolution of disputes, the preservation of the nuclear and conventional balance, confidence-building measures and the non-use of force, as prescribed by the United Nations Charter. In this context, we are ready to discuss nuclear and missile restraints, as well as nuclear risk-reduction measures, with India, in a structured, comprehensive and integrated dialogue.

Pakistan is fully aware of the responsibilities of its nuclear status. We have declared a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing. Pakistan was not the first to initiate nuclear tests and will not be the first to resume them. We are ready to formalize a bilateral treaty with India for a mutual test ban. We have strengthened our export controls and have established multi-layered custodial controls on all our nuclear assets. Let me assure the Assembly that our strategic assets are very well guarded and in very safe hands. We are constantly upgrading our command and control measures, and we have instituted an elaborate nuclear command and control mechanism for ironclad custodial controls to ensure the safety and security of all our assets. Pakistan is opposed to an arms race in South Asia, be it nuclear or conventional. We will maintain deterrence at the minimum level. We want to live in the region with honour and with dignity.

I would now like to very briefly cover internal developments in Pakistan. Over the past two years, the focus has been on economic revival, poverty alleviation, the improvement of governance in Pakistan, political restructuring and the introduction of genuine democracy in the country. We have successfully put in place a sound democratic structure that is based on empowerment of the people at the grassroots level. A revolutionary step has been taken through the provision of one third of the seats to women on the district-level governing councils.

I want to put on record at this gathering that Pakistan is proud of this representation and empowerment of women, which is a unique feature in the world. Our resolve to hold elections to the Provincial and National Assemblies and to the Senate in October 2002, in accordance with the road map I announced last August, will remain unchanged in spite of the prevailing environment in the region.

In conclusion, and in view of the fact that we are going through a time of enormous trials and tribulations, I wish to make an appeal — an appeal for the sake of mankind, for the sake of our future generations and for the sake of a better world.

Let justice prevail; let no people be wronged; let suffering be eliminated; let discontent be addressed; let humanity rise as one nation to eliminate subjugation of the weak; and let there be peace.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President and Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the statement he has just made.

General Pervez Musharraf, President and Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Andrés Pastrana Arango, President of the Republic of Colombia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Colombia.

Mr. Andrés Pastrana Arango, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Andrés Pastrana Arango, President of the Republic of Colombia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Pastrana Arango (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, on behalf of the Government of Colombia, to express our satisfaction at your assumption of the presidency of this session of the General Assembly. Your experience and leadership are valuable credentials for bringing our deliberations to a fruitful result. I wish also to pay tribute to your predecessor, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri, whose diplomatic skills contributed decisively to the Assembly's work.

I want, further, to speak of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, whose authority, dedication and meaningful contribution will serve as inspiration for the decisions that Member States must take at this session.

Let me take this opportunity to reiterate our satisfaction at the honour accorded to the United Nations and to the Secretary-General through the award of the Nobel Peace Prize. That was a well-deserved tribute to our Organization, to the values shared by its Member States, and, in particular, to the Secretary General, whose personal commitment and visionary approach have given new life to the United Nations and have helped to consolidate its international credibility. That decision was more than an acknowledgement of past achievements; it provided encouragement that inspires the work of the United Nations in the light of the challenges of the new millennium.

Two months ago the entire world was shaken by a series of unprecedented terrorist acts. We have all spoken of the dreadful effects of these attacks. We have all expressed our solidarity to the people of the United States. And we all agree that those irrational acts not only affected one single country but were in fact an attack against all mankind. But we must go even further; we must understand why such events occurred and what we must do to ensure that similar acts never happen again – never again.

The tragedy of 11 September had the positive effect of uniting us all against a common enemy: terrorism. And it did something else: it removed the dissembling from our words; it stripped the hypocrisy from our discourse; it moved us out of the world of grey tones to which we were so accustomed. Now we must work to replace it with a black-and-white world that is free of ambiguity.

And what were those greys that are so evident today? They were the ambiguities we all expressed in respect of violence and the money that finances it. In the past, when an act against civilians anywhere in the world suited our interests, we would speak of a humanitarian crisis, of defending democracy, of reasons of State. And we continued on impassively, with a clear conscience. But when an act against civilians anywhere did not suit our interests, we would take a firm stand, we would react with indignation and we would speak of terrorism, of attacks against mankind, of treacherous attacks against democracy and human rights.

Let there be no more ambiguity or equivocation. The time has come to define our position, with no vague half answers: either we side with mankind, its dignity and its integrity, or we do not.

Whenever human dignity or civilians are attacked, that is an act of terrorism. It does not matter whether it is perpetrated by a group of religious fanatics or by an organization claiming to have political ideals. There is no pretext for attacking defenceless civilians. The dividing line is very clear: either we respect human life and dignity or we stand against humankind.

The horrendous acts of 11 September do not represent a collision of civilizations, religions or cultures. The only collision is between a violent fanatical minority on the one hand, and all forms of civilization on the other. We cannot accept any further attempts to justify violence. No matter how much it costs us — even if it goes against our present interests — there is something far more valuable than anything else in the world: human life and human dignity.

Today, we must all stand together and unreservedly condemn all acts of violence against any human being, regardless of the pretext. If we do not cast our lot in favour of mankind and human values, what will be left for us? What right will we have to call ourselves the leaders of a civilization gone adrift?

I address the Assembly today with the overwhelming responsibility and authority vested in me as President of a country, Colombia, that for decades has endured an internal conflict where every new day brings more deaths and kidnappings because of the intransigence of illegal groups seeking to impose themselves at the cost of the lives of their compatriots.

And I address the Assembly today representing a country, Colombia, that has been the main victim of worldwide drug addiction, a country that has suffered too many deaths, that has sacrificed natural and financial resources to combat a crime that is not its own. It is a global crime whose vast illegal proceeds remain outside our borders.

In those two capacities, I address the international community, represented in the General Assembly, to demand, head held high, that we move from rhetoric to action. The world is distressed by this ominous terrorism. I say candidly that we ourselves have also suffered from such terrorism for quite some time. But

we have not always felt the pulse of the international community beating firmly by our side.

We all know that the world market for illegal drugs is the number-one source of financing for worldwide terrorism and death. Yet the international community has been content simply to suggest or demand that production centres control drug trafficking through law enforcement and through eradication and interdiction action, forgetting that this scourge is much more than just a problem of cultivation and trafficking. It is a global problem with global ramifications.

Colombia has always said, and my Government has repeated again and again in every possible international forum, that it is necessary to control illegal drug production, but that we cannot forget that this is a very complex transnational business and that the vast proceeds of narcotics trafficking do not stay in our country. No, indeed: those profits move freely through international financial markets where seemingly respectable financiers and businessmen prosper, enjoying the tolerance of the entire world.

We must also learn from our misfortunes — especially from our misfortunes — and we have learned something from the events of 11 September. We have learned that lax control of financial institutions and the existence of tax and banking havens are like giving criminals a letter of marque to make and multiply their profits, to amass the fortunes that finance death.

The shared responsibility that my country demands in the fight against illegal drugs must also be applied to the fight against terrorism. This new international conviction that we have all been late in implementing — perhaps because we are still numbed by the so-called post-cold-war era — must be translated into acts that go beyond rhetoric. There must be no more coexisting with money laundering, even if it means going after the major financial conglomerates of the world.

There must be no more uncontrolled production and sale of the chemical precursors used in illicit drug production.

There must be no more illegal or uncontrolled manufacturing and sale of the weapons that propagate death.

Only if we, beginning with the developed countries, translate those principles into reality, with concrete action and with political will, will we give meaning and effectiveness to the fight that my country, Colombia, has been waging for many years against the cultivation and production of drugs.

No country is free from the destructive consequences of illegal drugs. There are no epicentres in this illegal business. This criminal activity is global in nature. The drug problem, and organized crime in general, undermine the institutional framework, conspire against democracy, compromise governance and sow death and violence. They are a hothouse of corruption; they erode judicial systems and they thwart the rule of law. Shared responsibility, therefore, means the responsibility to defend democracy, our principles and institutions.

The year 2003 will mark five years since the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, the so-called world drug summit. We should now begin to promote an in-depth review of all the accomplishments, the obstacles encountered along the way, the new challenges to be faced and the additional action we must take to break, once and for all, the links that support this global phenomenon.

But we must do so without losing ourselves in grey tones. The commitment of the international community must be real and concrete so that we can at last attack the finances of the traffickers of death. Let us combat the business in which they make all their profits.

Fortunately, the Security Council has taken important decisions in this regard, moving the fight against crime in the right direction. Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and the measures being taken by all the Governments of the world to combat the financing of international terrorism are an essential step forward that Colombia supports without hesitation.

We must work together to dismantle the structure of the extremists' financial support. That is the only way to create a safer world for our children. It is the only way to defeat the plague of violence and terrorism at its roots: the transnational empires of drugs.

A year ago, we gathered in this same Hall on the occasion of the Millennium Summit. None of the priorities identified at that time was stressed as much as the need to ensure that globalization benefits all the peoples of the world. The reality of globalization is one of inequality; it has led to dissatisfaction and conflict.

We need, through deep reflection, to become aware of our responsibility for humanizing globalization and ensuring that it reflects the interests of all countries and regions.

The Conference on Financing for Development to be held early next year in Mexico is particularly important in this light. Unless we mobilize the necessary financial resources and move towards a new architecture ensuring a stable international financial system, the commitments and the course set out at the Millennium Summit will be a dead letter.

Those same criteria must guide next year's World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. On that occasion, we must consolidate a positive vision and devise a road map for achieving real harmony between economic growth, social development and the preservation of the environment.

This is the last time I will address the General Assembly as President of Colombia. Each year since 1998, I have spoken before the Assembly about the commitment of my Government and of the people of Colombia to achieving peace, democracy and progress in social justice.

More than any other leader of my country I have fully devoted myself to achieving peace. I do not regret having done that, because we Colombians are tired of violence, intimidation, crime and kidnappings. I hope that all groups living outside the law will make the right choice at this crucial juncture, not only in the history of Colombia but also in the history of all humankind. It is up to them to decide how they want to be treated: as terrorists and drug-traffickers or as political insurgents. They must define themselves through their actions. If their actions lead them to be treated as mere terrorists, then they must clearly understand — and I say this vehemently to the world — that Colombia and the international community will honour their commitments and carry out the measures adopted by the Security Council to combat terrorism.

History goes on; it does not stop. Leaders come and go, but peoples continue along the path laid out before them. Even today, I believe that peace is possible if the will to make peace exists. I still believe, with the firm hope of someone who knows the values of his people, that the road we started on will not be barren.

During my mandate, the international community has shown an unprecedented solidarity with the people of Colombia and its quest for peace. I am grateful for that from the bottom of my heart.

I must give special recognition to the Secretary General's Special Adviser on International Assistance to Colombia, Jan Egeland, for his assistance, and to the generous contribution of friendly nations during the talks with insurgent groups. The world has sided with peace in Colombia, and that is a gesture we understand and appreciate in its full worth.

Today I echo the strong and determined voice of 40 million Colombians, who are all fighting for a better and more dignified life, and I reaffirm before the world a message to the international community that proposes and demands clarity.

The time for lamenting is over. It is time for definitions.

Let us put aside the empty speeches. Let us leave behind the moral double standards that measure acts that suit us with one yardstick and the acts that do not with another. Let us advance, united together, against all forms of terrorism, whatever their rationales.

No more ambiguity. No more justifications of violence. Let us never forget that there is nothing more sacred, more valuable or worthier than human life.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Colombia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Andrés Pastrana Arango, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of the Republic of Peru

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Peru.

Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of the Republic of Peru, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of the Republic of Peru, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Toledo Manrique (spoke in Spanish): This is the first time I have had the privilege of addressing this prestigious world forum. To arrive here, I travelled a long road. I was born in a small village high in the Andes, at an altitude of nearly 4,000 metres above sea level. Like millions of brothers from our continent of Latin America, I know first-hand the hard face of poverty.

To survive, in my childhood, I sold newspapers, lottery tickets and shined the shoes in which others walked.

Today, I have come before this world assembly as the constitutional President of Peru, bringing the stories, the hopes and the dreams of millions of Peruvians.

I come from a country that is heir to an ancient culture and the cradle of great civilizations. I come to lead our present with responsibility and to construct our future with vision. Thus, in these few brief minutes, I would like to share with the Assembly three subjects that are of the greatest concern to my Government:

First of all, I would like to be clear about one thing: we are engaged in a head-on struggle against terrorism and its perverse alliance with drug trafficking and corruption. These are scourges for which there can be no room for ambiguity. With the same determination, however, I need to point out that the world is facing the enormous challenge of mustering the necessary clear vision so as not to put off the human development agenda, which in large measure is the underlying principle of the United Nations.

Secondly, there is the need to reduce military expenditures in Latin America and in the world, so that these resources can be channelled instead into a direct fight against poverty.

Thirdly, we need to think and act together in dealing with the world economic situation to protect employment opportunities and income for the poorest. There can be no real democracy without sustained economic growth that will generate decent jobs.

Barely a year ago, Peru was enmeshed in a dramatic struggle between a corrupt dictatorship and the hopes for democracy of the vast majority of the Peruvian people. Faced with this situation, we Peruvians stood up and proved capable of mobilizing ourselves and peacefully struggling to regain our democracy and our freedom. On behalf of millions of men and women of my country, I would like to thank the peoples and Governments of the world for their friendship, active role and solidarity in helping us regain our democracy.

Today, Peru has now begun a new democratic dawn. We are aware, however, that we have great responsibilities. We must strengthen a full-fledged democracy and our still fragile institutions and reactivate our economy so as to achieve sustainable growth that will generate decent and productive jobs. We must strengthen our institutions and defeat poverty, which form an indissoluble part of the same goal, because poverty, corruption and drug trafficking conspire against democracy. We can now declare, here before the international community, that the time has come to give a human face to globalization, so that competitiveness becomes permanent.

We Peruvians have freshly inscribed in our collective memory a horror of terrorism. During the 20 years of terror, Peru has lost 25,000 human lives, which has cost more than $30 billion and has left the poor even poorer. That is why I reaffirm our deep solidarity with the people and Government of the United States in the face of the insanity of terror of 11 September. This was not an attack against the United States alone. It was an attack against the peoples that believe in peace and democracy, for all our differences of opinion.

We are determined to take unambiguous actions to fight terrorism. We shall do so in the spirit of respect for religious freedoms and ethnic identity. We will actively contribute to the work that has been entrusted to the ad hoc Committee of the Security Council, making available to it the experts that may be necessary to intelligently fight the threat of international terrorism within the framework of the principles of the Charter and the decisions of the Security Council.

At an inter-American multilateral forum, we made an effective contribution. This week we introduced before the Organization of American States a draft convention against terrorism. In keeping with this purpose, this morning we deposited at the Secretary-General's office the following instruments: the Statute of the International Criminal Court; the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings; and the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

Thus, my country has become a party to all international treaties against terrorism.

Our States must build up an extensive network of obligations to effectively cooperate in the judicial, police, information and financial fields to facilitate the capture and extradition of the perpetrators of crimes against humanity or of acts of corruption that lead to such crimes. Human rights violations and corruption are two sides of the same coin. They spell impunity.

It would not be possible to face up to corruption without linking it with the fight against drug trafficking and money laundering. We are working hard in this regard. We have established high-level authorities directly under the head of State to wage the fight against drug trafficking and corruption.

I know that this is a decision that impinges upon powerful interests. We shall not be swayed from our determination. Peru is now seeking to re-establish democracy to the fullest. We are aware, however, that there are powerful forces hidden in the shadows, which, with certain political accomplices, are trying to achieve impunity for the corruption committed during the decade of Montesinos and Fujimori. That is why, addressing you from this prestigious forum, I call on the international community not to allow, as the globalization of justice process, for capricious interpretation of certain national laws that trivialize actions or allow for the granting of impunity.

There is no justification for a democratic government to sacrifice development of the poor for the sake of an arms race. Therefore, the second issue central to our foreign policy is our proposal, which we put to the Heads of State and Government of Latin America, for an immediate freeze on the purchase of offensive weapons in the region. We also seek an agreement among the countries of Latin America to reduce their military expenditures and to reorient their financial resources towards investment in nutrition, health and education.

Peru has recently achieved important agreements on this issue with the brotherly countries of Chile and Ecuador and is promoting an understanding among the other countries of our region that will allow us to embark together on the path towards the reduction of poverty there. Peace is not only the silence of guns; it should also mean dignity for the poor. This proposal is aimed at the adoption of a broad regional framework to reduce military spending. However, might we not also consider expanding this proposal, which is not a new one, to other regions around the globe? We must invest in the great enterprise of knowledge — in the minds of our people. That means investing more, and more wisely, in nutrition, health and education.

The third item relates to our concern about the global economy. We regret the onset of recession in the most important developed economies, which is shrinking markets, eliminating jobs and thus hindering the implementation of the measures set out in the Millennium Declaration. There is an urgent need to control the damage being done to the poor economies by the current global economic crisis. It is therefore important that the next round of the World Trade Organization not be an aseptic commercial round. It should be a round on behalf of the poorest, avoiding protectionist policies for the agricultural sector of the industrialized countries and allowing the textile industry to create good jobs in our countries.

I call on the people of the world to embark unflinchingly and without fear on the path towards a future of peace and democracy, without terrorism, without violations of human rights and without impunity. I am convinced that, together, we can build a globalized, competitive yet united world with a human face. In that respect, Peru assumes its responsibility today before the General Assembly.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Peru for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of the Republic of Peru, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Slovenia.

Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome His Excellency, Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kučan (*spoke in Slovenian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): All our admiration goes to the United States for making possible the normal work of the United Nations and the sessions of the General Assembly despite the recent tragic events and all their global consequences. The tragic crime, which affected the whole world, has brutally confronted us with new, very serious and long-term issues. This year's general debate is thus an opportunity and a new and great responsibility for us all — a responsibility that must be accepted. Words of condemnation and solidarity cannot be enough.

As we sympathize profoundly with the American people, we must also tell the world in one voice that we shall be deliberately and effectively allied in the future, too, and that we will cooperate in the fight against terrorism and in the eradication of the roots of that evil. We will responsibly consider joint measures for a world of more peace, greater freedom, solidarity and security and more social justice for every person and every nation, as well as ever less room for violence. The idea of such a world requires us to avoid the vortex of evil by undertaking a considered and resolute response to the terrorist crime that was committed. The immediate decisive military reaction of the United States of America and other countries of the anti-terrorist alliance was imperative.

We cannot simply rest at that, however. The vortex of violence could threaten the democratic values that humanity has set over its long development as the measure of life in human society. That is why we are ultimately obliged to avoid dividing cultures along the principle of "us versus them", dividing races, religions and nations into the categories of civilized and barbaric, and ascribing a priori fundamentalism to any religion or civilization. The United Nations has proclaimed this year the Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations. We should seize this opportunity.

The contemporary world is diverse, but all modern civilizations, cultures and major religions respect human dignity and human life. Killing is an aberration anywhere in the world. Sadly, human and social pathology have made killing a lucrative business and given international terrorism its own internal dynamic. The instigators and perpetrators of these despicable acts must be brought to justice, while it is the responsibility of politics to remove the social and political roots of this evil. It is the universal values of all contemporary civilizations, such as the sanctity of life and respect for human dignity, that enable the creation of a global democracy based on a global ethos.

Resolute action and attention must focus on those groups and individuals throughout the world who brutally violate these principles and bring chaos, murder and madness into our human world. Sadly, there are enough such people in all cultures and civilizations in all parts of the human world, including the Christian world. They warn us that the global world requires a different perception of the world and its dilemmas, especially of the unequal distribution of poverty and wealth, and that it raises questions to which there are as yet no answers.

At the Millennium Summit last year, we came very close to a realistic analysis of some of the major economic, financial, social, cultural, political and ecological effects of the global economy. We have come closer to the important understanding that a global world also requires global responsibility, and that starts with the responsibility of each State.

States cannot arbitrarily do things that are in complete conflict with the values of the democratic world. In particular, cannot systematically violate basic human rights and freedoms through State violence, nor can they allow and encourage activities that threaten the security of other countries and of the international community, all in the name of their own sovereignty, even within their own boundaries. Neither can they ignore such activity by others and shut themselves behind their own borders.

Last year's position on humanitarian intervention was the first step in this direction, yet, unfortunately, not a sufficient one. The escalation of internationally syndicated and organized terrorism demands that further steps be taken. We cannot allow terrorism and crime to abuse the opportunities offered by our globalized world before the democratic world itself is even in a position to put these opportunities to good use in finding answers to completely new challenges.

I see these challenges in pronounced divisions with global implications — divisions into owners of capital, knowledge, ideas and information technologies, on the one hand, and the billions condemned to ignorance, a life of poverty and vegetating without prospects at the margins of society, on the other hand, in the ever greater financial weakness of many nation-States and whole continents that are left without development potentials or

prospects. In its relentless growth in power and authority, global capital has long since gone beyond State borders. However, it assumes no responsibility for people's social position and prospects for freedom and democracy, for development and the future, for people's security. This responsibility is left to State administrations.

I also see challenges in all kinds of fundamentalism, even in the perverted understanding of competitiveness which leads to production and services with an ever-shrinking labour force, without caring about people and nature, about life on the planet and its future in an economy whose only motive and aim is profit.

I see them also in the very pragmatically oriented national and international politics operating in a framework of dramatic simplicity and simplification, and so their euphoric haste does not match their effect. These are politics that ignore the dimension of time and the duration of phenomena, such as the ecological effects of genetic or biomedical interventions that are not apparent immediately, but perhaps only in decades, only with the coming generations.

I see challenges in the neglect of a comprehensive and interconnected perspective on phenomena and processes and in the disregard for the way in which they are interconnected. All modern political, social and ecological dramas and conflicts, as well as the global socio-pathological cancers, are a result of the interaction of a range of social forces and elements. These phenomena — including international terrorism — which are like epidemics, cannot be confined within the borders of one or more States. This applies to a host of phenomena, not just terrorism, but also ecology, food, genetics, finance, the information society and violence.

I also see challenges in the lack of communication between the authorities and increasingly global civil movements. Protests from Seattle to Genoa are a powerful warning of the danger of a division into two worlds that are beginning to communicate solely through protests and violence.

The world today is clearly different from what it was before. It could be better, but only with an awareness of and mechanisms for assuming global responsibility. This will enable the search for a dynamic balance leaving no room for the chaos that uncontrolled developments and acts of terror lead to. In order to achieve this, we will have to change many things.

Therefore, adapting the United Nations to these new circumstances is, in a way, a call of distress. It will not be a simple task. All 189 Members and their representatives are bound primarily to the sovereignty of their own States. However, the world clearly also needs global governance. More than ever, we need the United Nations as a global entity common to all States, an entity that will be able, with the full authority that rests on the global responsibility of States, to take measures to the benefit of dynamic development, a development of balanced forces and effects of the global economy and globalization in general. Otherwise, we will have to state the alternative.

We must accept the recognition that every society, including the global one, must subordinate itself to specific rules, or else it will be subjected to the rule of crude force. Our difficulty is that we have overlooked that the world has become a single society full of internal contrasts, which in real life, especially in international relations, recognizes and respects few rules. What we urgently need is the common political will to provide legitimacy to a universal system of institutions and bodies, to which together we have entrusted the power to prescribe common rules.

We need common political will to subject ourselves to these rules and to respect them. The actual power to prescribe rules would not be only in the hands of States. Could this also be the United Nations? What reforms are needed to achieve this, in order for the United Nations to become this? We cannot wait with the answers.

I am also speaking from the experience of Slovenia, which I represent. In gaining independence 10 years ago, we experienced brief but serious violence on our own territory. In our immediate vicinity, South-Eastern Europe, we were faced with one of the most barbaric policies since the Second World War, a policy responsible for genocide and other forms of widespread violence. With independence, Slovenia stepped into a world that is prepared to behave better than the self-enclosed world that the former Yugoslavia had become in the final years of its life, when the equality of rights of people and nations was violated and when hope for a different future was denied. We have stepped onto the path of freedom, and Slovenia has accepted its own share of the responsibility for our global world.

I believe that this global world will tend toward a dynamic balance, provided that States — large and small, rich and poor, technologically developed and marginalized — will together seek new solutions. The venue can only be a fundamentally reformed United Nations. It is within such a United Nations that both a durable coalition against terrorism and a durable coalition of common responsibility of all countries for a world with more solidarity and social justice for all humanity and all its parts can be achieved.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Slovenia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Jorge Quiroga Ramírez, President of the Republic of Bolivia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Bolivia.

Mr. Jorge Quiroga Ramírez, President of the Republic of Bolivia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Jorge Quiroga Ramírez, President of the Republic of Bolivia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Quiroga Ramírez (*spoke in Spanish*): I come from the city of La Paz to add Bolivia's voice to this universal support the United Nations has received through the Nobel Peace Prize. This award expresses better than all the speeches could possibly do the way in which the world appreciates the Organization and its Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan. The mediating role performed by the Organization, its calls to nations to agree among themselves, the courage it has in assuming risks and the willingness it has shown to offer lives for a cause go beyond the mere performance of a duty; they are an example to all our Governments. The active role played by the Organization is more necessary now than ever before.

This is a time in which the evil, malignant shadow of terror is rising on the horizon as the new century dawns. The Berlin Wall was the symbol of ideological divisions during the second half of the twentieth century. We must now, after 11 September, tear down the wall of terrorism and intolerance that a few people wish to raise to divide the world.

On one side of this new wall are those of us who have built up and believe in democracy with pluralism. On the other side are those that wish despotically to impose their beliefs, with no respect for the rule of law. On one side of this new wall are those of us who permit and encourage the freedom of worship and expression. On the other side are those that do not practice, permit or tolerate it. On one side of this wall are those of us who every day try to create equality of opportunities for all women. On the other side are those that oppress and dominate them. On one side of this wall are those of us who value freedom above all. On the other side are the terrorists that wish to destroy and restrict it.

Let there be no doubt that Bolivia will always be on the side of democracy, freedom and tolerance. We want a life in peace and harmony. This is why my Government, without any hesitation, with total conviction and in all forums, has expressed its full support for the measures undertaken by the coalition led by the United States Government after the attacks that took the lives of thousands of innocent people, the majority of whom were in this very city of New York.

Terrorism is to a large extent incubated in and fed by the underground world of drug trafficking. We must not accept that in attacking freedom, terrorism disguises itself by putting forward political claims. We cannot accept that drug traffickers, seeking to undermine our democracies, drape themselves in the mantle of legitimate social demands. It is clear that terrorism and drug trafficking are Siamese twins and enemies of the free democracies. This is why we must combat each of them with the same vigour and determination.

Bolivia, with all its limitations, is performing its task in fighting drug trafficking. By the will of the majority of the Bolivians, expressed through our own national dialogue, guided by our own interests and encouraged by our own public opinion, we are irreversibly moving forward towards eradicating illegal coca crops used to prepare cocaine and are entering into the final stage of the Dignity Plan, whose purpose is to remove Bolivia from the drug circuit.

But the work is not finished. International solidarity and support are now more important than

ever before. To complete the task, Bolivia needs support on two levels. First of all, the international community must realize that sustained support for alternative development programmes is more necessary for the countries that have eliminated the bulk of illegal coca crops and cocaine, and in which many people have been displaced as a result.

Bolivia has reduced more than 90 percent of its illegal coca leaf production. However obvious it may seem, this percentage must be repeated over and over, because many international bureaucracies allocate resources according to the size of the problem, which is mistakenly defined as the volume of production of coca leaves and cocaine, when the real economic problem arises from the size of the reduction that has been achieved and the proportional reduction of the income generated by this activity. Bolivia deserves and needs more support than ever before, because it has made more progress than ever before.

Secondly, and of more relevance now, it is necessary to provide access to markets; the opportunity to fight for a place under the sun; and the right to work, produce and sell. And here, at this point, the decision by the United States and the European Union to open up their markets to the products of alternative development takes on critical and definitive significance.

Bolivia is the least developed nation of South America, the economy that is most open the region and the only country that has achieved such a dramatic reduction in such a poisonous and harmful product as cocaine, within so short a time. For these three reasons, we feel that we have every right to call for access to markets through free trade — triply free trade: free from tariffs, free from subsidies and free from non-tariff measures.

We need free trade, the triply free trade that applies to sectors such as telecommunications, banking, computers and turbines, must also apply to agriculture, textiles and leather. Unfortunately, these last three labour-intensive sectors are governed by nineteenth-century rules in the midst of the third millennium.

In Bolivia we are moving forward with decentralized and participatory programmes on health and education. An educated and vaccinated citizen who does not have a market, however, is not a full-fledged citizen of the present-day world of ours. In Bolivia we have straightened out and opened up our economy, but we have not seen full reciprocity in the developed world or on the part of our neighbours.

In Bolivia we have almost entirely eliminated the production of cocaine, which however harmful it might be, was an export product that was not subject to subsidies, barriers or tariffs. This is why we require access to markets to guarantee the completion of the Dignity Plan and avoid frustrating the will of our citizens, who have assumed the challenge of moving from illegal activities to legitimate work, without, however, having achieved the same access to the market.

On the threshold of the twenty-first century, in the midst of a severe economic and political crisis that affects all the countries of the region, Bolivia is facing another challenge that can decisively change its future. In the few years since the work on the most important gas pipeline of South America was completed, Bolivia's natural gas reserves grew exponentially, and have made my country a significant player in the hemisphere-wide market. We are now serving a growing part of the energy demands of Brazil, and we firmly intend to go on from here to reach the markets of the Pacific, Mexico and the United States.

The tragic events of 11 September saw to it that energy and gas integration must be based on a long-term vision that takes into account three elements: extensive gas reserves, a reliable economy and a solid democracy. Bolivia has these three elements. The projects that are now being studied and negotiated will transform the productive structure of my country, propel the growth rates, reinforce our role as a hub and the environmentally clean heart of the continent, while expanding our role and presence on the Pacific.

Bolivia will thus take another step on the march that it began more than 120 years ago to return to the sea of our ancestors.

Bolivia thus will reassert its unflinching determination to regain its status as a maritime nation, something with which we were born into independent life.

Bolivia supports the struggle against terrorism and for freedom. My country, more than any other country, is making a gigantic effort to fight the ally of terrorism — that is, drug trafficking. Given this effort,

given our determination to be open, and given the need to fight poverty, my country calls for access to markets.

Bolivia will play a central role in working towards reliable gas and energy integration in the twenty-first century.

Finally, we realize that the long struggle for freedom and the fight against terrorism is just beginning and will end only when all the citizens of the world, men and women alike, will be entitled to vote, to elect, to offer their opinions and to profess their faith, to move about freely and, above all, to live free from fear and terror. The United Nations must be the place where the world comes together to walk down this shared path. And together we will build this road towards integration and peace, as these times demand.

Address by Mr. Frederick Chiluba, President of the Republic of Zambia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Zambia.

Mr. Frederick Chiluba, President of the Republic of Zambia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Frederick Chiluba, the President of the Republic of Zambia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Chiluba: Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election as President of this fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. My delegation pledges its support and cooperation to you and your country as you discharge your important responsibilities.

I also wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, President of the fifty-fifth session. We are grateful to him for the able and successful manner in which he presided over the session.

I wish to salute the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his re-election to the helm of the United Nations, which is an attestation of the commitment and the dynamism with which he has guided the Organization during this period of great challenge.

I am addressing this session in my dual capacity as President of the Republic of Zambia and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). This occasion holds a special significance to me as I make my last statement to the General Assembly as President of the Republic of Zambia, having almost come to the end of my second and last tenure of office of my country.

This year the general debate of the General Assembly is taking place in November instead of two months ago, because of the tragic events of 11 September. Those developments united us on the need to postpone this session, just as we were united in our resolve to fight international terrorism, which knows no boundaries. Indeed, today more than ever before, the entire world seems more conscious of, and gripped by, the evil of international terrorism and the consequent loss of life and destruction of property.

Terrorism is an affront to humanity. It is a heinous and cowardly act that is hated almost as much as we hated apartheid or any form of racism. It is for these reasons that Africa has for a long time been fighting international terrorism. In Algiers, Algeria, in 1999, we, as African leaders, took a mammoth decision by adopting a Convention on the prevention and combating of all forms of terrorism. Although the Convention has not entered into force, Africa has since then been seeking international support in the adoption of appropriate strategies for the effective eradication of the multiple root causes of terrorism. We remain resolute and resolutely committed to, and united in, the pursuit of this goal.

However, let me also hasten to add that, in spite of its gravity and magnitude, the threat of terrorism must not override or deduct from the appropriate focus on the outstanding matters on the global agenda. Burning issues such as the scourge of conflicts, poverty eradication, the debt problem and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, among other things, should continue to be accorded the necessary attention they so much deserve.

While many good things and positive developments have been taking place on the African continent, these are, nevertheless, largely overshadowed by the many conflicts that continue to rage in a number of our countries. We have witnessed conflict in the Mano River basin involving Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea; the situations in Sudan and Somalia are yet to be settled; disturbances recently erupted in the Comoros; and violence continues to threaten the constitutionally elected Government in the

Central African Republic. The Great Lakes region remains a tinderbox, while the conflict in Angola has experienced no movement towards resolution for quite some time now. Meanwhile, the ceasefire agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is yet to be fully implemented.

Africa does not lack the political will or resolve to find solutions to these conflicts. Neither has Africa sat back and waited for the outside world to come and resolve these conflicts. Instead, Africa has acknowledged responsibility for these conflicts and has spearheaded efforts to bring peace wherever there have been conflicts.

It was Africa, through the efforts of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, that brought about an end to the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict. The guns were silenced in Liberia and Sierra Leone, thanks to the efforts of the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), who are still leading the effort to bring peace to the Mano River basin. The leaders of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have continued to seek peaceful settlements in Sudan and Somalia, while the Lusaka peace processes have addressed the conflicts in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Most recently, a Transitional Government of National Unity was inaugurated in Burundi on 1 November 2001, as a culmination of efforts started by the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and completed by Nelson Mandela, two of Africa's most distinguished sons.

It is clear from the foregoing that what Africa needs to successfully resolve the conflicts on the continent is the moral, practical and financial support of the international community. Africa has always believed in the dictum that in unity there is strength. We believe that all nations belong to a common global community with a shared destiny and shared responsibilities.

To this end, Africa has always been ready and willing to participate in efforts to restore peace where peace has broken down, irrespective of the location of the region. Our men and women have served as peacekeepers in Europe, in Asia and in the Middle East because we believe that peace is indivisible.

Africa therefore expects that, just as we are ready and willing to serve in the promotion and defence of peace everywhere, so, too, should the international community be willing to be full partners in the search for peace in Africa.

In this regard, I cannot help but register our disappointment that after the painstaking efforts by Sir Ketumile Masire to organize the inter-Congolese national dialogue in Addis Ababa on 15 October 2001, and notwithstanding the many pledges made to finance it, the dialogue could not take off due partly to insufficient funds. I would therefore like to appeal to the international community, through the Assembly, to provide the necessary assistance to Sir Ketumile Masire, the facilitator of the inter-Congolese dialogue, to enable him to proceed with organizing the dialogue and to conclude the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In particular, I wish to make a special appeal to all those who have made pledges to the facilitator to release these pledges urgently.

Conflicts do not stand alone or develop in a vacuum. Political conflicts and social tension are a result of imbalances in the dispensation of political power, economic wealth and benefits, as well as of social suppression, segregation and the repression of one or more groups of people on the basis of race, ethnicity or even religion. The African continent, with barely 40 years of independence, has suffered centuries of fractured development, deprivation of resources and the political and social suppression of its people. These are the conditions at the centre of Africa's current struggle to redress both the political and economic imbalances.

The United Nations World Conference against Racism, held in South Africa this year, took a major historical step by refocusing on that human injustice of the past, whose consequences continue to ravage our societies to this day. The Conference condemned the slave trade, slavery, colonialism and apartheid as crimes against humanity. The condemnation of past injustices should be made on the premise that we now have the will, the resolve and the commitment to embark upon the process of healing, reconciliation and redress. Our final objective is to bring about justice, political liberation, economic development and a fair social system that will promote the human rights of individuals, the national sovereignty of States and mutually beneficial regional and global interdependence and cooperation.

The African economic and social condition has been on the agenda of the United Nations since

Africa's decade of independence. Slavery, colonialism and apartheid, and now pervasive poverty, misery and squalor for the majority of our people continue to ravage the continent with negative consequences for human life. The advent of HIV/AIDS, coupled with centuries-old diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis and with many other communicable yet curable diseases such as cholera, dysentery and diarrhoea, has reduced African life expectancy from 68 years to 50 years, and in some countries to only a pathetic 38 years. The mortality rate for children under the age of 5 years is 140 per 1,000 births on the average. Such adverse social conditions cannot be at all conducive to economic development and improvement in the standard of living. These conditions have to be changed for the better.

The development process of post-colonial or independent Africa has also accumulated debt and suffered negative terms of trade for its raw materials and products exported to the developed countries. On the one hand, the resulting huge trade deficits of African nations reduce their purchasing power for the technology, equipment and investment capital they need for economic growth and development. On the other hand, the deficit increases the foreign debt and shrinks public investment programmes for infrastructure and education and health delivery systems, thereby further suppressing the very conditions necessary for development and the eradication of poverty.

Africa is not asking for charity! No. What Africa is asking for is more accessible conditions for its raw materials and products, and for prices that are fair and conducive to development. We are not asking for charity. No. We are asking for more African countries to have access to the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC), so that they could use the freed resources to build infrastructure such as schools, combat diseases, provide safe drinking water and invest in income-generating community activities because, eventually, these are the measures which will reduce poverty. We further call on the international community to intensify and accelerate initiatives that should bring debt cancellation to the poor countries. There cannot be a credible solution to the problem of poverty in Africa without debt cancellation.

The continent of Africa has accepted and fully shares the responsibilities that come with globalization. As a developing continent, we need to continue to reorganize ourselves to face the challenges of the time. The thirty-seventh session of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Lusaka, Zambia, last July, took Africa to a new historical stage when it launched the African Union (AU). The AU will elevate Africa's integration agenda by forging a more cohesive political union, while also creating an economic community of nations. The Union also seeks to promote new levels of partnerships with the international community, particularly in the areas of sustainable economic growth and development and of peace and security. At the Lusaka Summit, the OAU also adopted a new economic-centred recovery programme and poverty reduction strategy called the New African Initiative, which is now called the New Partnership for African Development.

I wish to take this opportunity to express Africa's appreciation to the Group of 8 which, at its meeting in Genoa, Italy, in July, endorsed the African initiative. I also wish to thank the European Union, which, during our meeting last month in Brussels, pledged its full support of the initiative. It is important to note also that Africa has been an active participant in global trade liberalization initiatives. We thank the Government of the United States for the practical step it has taken through the African Growth and Opportunity Act. It is a pioneering example in expanding trade and export opportunities for Africa and for development.

Debt relief, debt cancellation, increased production, accessibility to export markets, better terms of trade and economic integration — these mark the way forward to African development, sustainable growth and poverty reduction. Under economic growth and improved social conditions, democracy and good governance will be sustained and conflicts reduced and managed, while peace and security will last.

The time has come for me to thank the people of Zambia for having given me the privilege and honour of serving in the distinguished capacity of President of the Republic of Zambia, to thank my colleagues in Africa for entrusting me with the chairmanship of the OAU and for their confidence and support and to thank all of you in the international community. I have tried my best during my tenure of office and can therefore only hope that I have lived and performed up to your expectations. Soon Zambia will have a new president. It is my hope that he will be accorded the same support

and cooperation you have so kindly given to me in the last ten years.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Zambia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Frederick Chiluba, President of the Republic of Zambia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Romania.

Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Iliescu: My most sincere congratulations go first to His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. His outstanding personal qualities and the consistently valuable contributions of his country, the Republic of Korea, to United Nations activities are clear guarantees that the stewardship of the current session of the General Assembly, which started under dramatic and sorrowful circumstances, has been entrusted to a safe pair of hands.

I would also like to renew my heartfelt congratulations to our Secretary-General on the well-deserved awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize and on his election to another term in office. Romania will continue to support his commendable endeavours towards reforming the Organization in a way that should enable it to cope effectively with the challenges, old and new, of our modern world.

The horrific terrorist attack of 11 September was a rude awakening for all of us. It brought into focus both the abyssal evil we have to confront and the high value of human solidarity in the international response to it. It also shed new light on some problems that the international community has been facing for quite a while and accelerated certain processes, the far-reaching consequences of which are still not easy to predict.

There can be no ambivalence or half measures when it comes to condemning and effectively combating terrorism and militant, violent fanaticism of any kind. The tragedy that befell the United States and the United Nations host city affected all humankind and created a new resolve to bring to justice the perpetrators and those who support, abet or harbour them. We share the views of the President of the United States, Mr. George W. Bush, that what is at stake is not just America's freedom but that this is the world's fight, civilization's fight, the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom.

Belief in those fundamental values have inspired the noble concept of the dialogue among civilizations, so eloquently expounded by the Secretary-General in his address to the Assembly. Indeed, it is only through dialogue that points of convergence can be identified and cooperation becomes possible on matters that acquire significance once they become the object of shared concern.

Mr. Borg (Malta), Vice-President, took the Chair.

From the very beginning, Romania joined the international democratic community in its ongoing campaign against evil-doers and their supporters for a safer and freer world. The consensual view of the Romanian nation across the political spectrum was unequivocally expressed in Parliament's decision to make Romania's air, maritime and land space available to the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and to provide access to any other facilities that our partners may require. This is tangible proof of our commitment to acting as a de facto member of the North Atlantic Alliance.

My country firmly supports the relevant resolutions recently adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council, and we have already undertaken the necessary steps to ensure their full implementation in Romania.

Regional solidarity is also essential. At a very recent conference on the common fight against terrorism, held in Warsaw on 6 November, the heads of State of Central and Eastern Europe reflected upon their past common experiences and voiced their determination to stand firmly united in the fight against terror for as long as it takes. It is also appropriate to highlight here the meaningful work done by the Bucharest-based Southeast European Cooperation Initiative Regional Crime Center for Combating

Transborder Crime, involving active inputs from 11 countries. The Center should build upon its current activities in order to enhance its contribution to the worldwide fight against terrorism by making good use of existing liaison systems, intelligence-sharing and joint task forces.

I fully agreed with Secretary-General Kofi Annan when he recently said that we must not let the terrorist attacks distract us from the rest of the work we have to do. In no way do these tragic events make the broader mission of the United Nations less relevant. Indeed, the new focus on terrorism should not divert us from the core business of the world Organization. The agenda of this session is both comprehensive and substantial. We share the view that a large portion of our work should be devoted to seeking practical ways to implement the broad agreement reached at the Millennium Summit along the lines indicated in the Secretary-General's visionary road map report.

We support the Secretary-General in his efforts to integrate human rights into the whole range of United Nations activities. We encourage closer cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, other United Nations agencies and mechanisms and regional structures that have extensive expertise in this field, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, whose chairmanship-in-office is currently held by Romania.

We regard the enhancement of the United Nations peacekeeping capability as a top priority. Recent experience in the Balkans and elsewhere has taught us that proper policing can be at least as important as the use of military might in modern-day peacekeeping and peace-building operations. That is why Romania has decided, in addition to its previous commitments in the area, to contribute a significant contingent of military policemen to the international presence in Kosovo to assist the transition from conflict to stability.

The United Nations can become a focal point for constructive interaction with regional or subregional structures and specialized organizations of civil society in dealing with concrete problems ranging from conflict prevention to peace-building and post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and sustainable development.

Probably the greatest challenge to the international community is still how to reduce economic and social disparities and to achieve sustainable growth and poverty reduction within and between all countries through appropriate policies and well-focused institution-building. The world's leaders have pledged to engage political determination, financial resources and innovative policies to reduce global poverty by half before the year 2015. This is most commendable, but it may prove to be more difficult to accomplish than originally envisaged.

The 11 September attacks have affected not only world security but also the global economy, which in the preceding months was already showing signs of a slowdown. The consequences are likely to be far-reaching and much more dangerous than those of the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis. The volume of international trade, which increased by almost 13 per cent in the year 2000, may decline by as much as 3 per cent in 2001. People in developing countries in particular are going to be hurt again.

The United Nations has an essential part to play in promoting further integration of the world economy in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. But let us face the reality: we live in a world where the developmental gap between the centre and the periphery, between North and South, between rich and poor, is still wide and growing wider. The existing mechanisms for an orderly transfer of resources appear to have been sadly inadequate. One would expect that the recent shock, and the renewed sense of global solidarity that it has triggered, would prompt us into action to address the underlying causes of blind anger: misery and hopelessness. The war against terrorism can be truly successful only if it also becomes a war against poverty, illiteracy, disease and intolerance. I trust that the collective wisdom and goodwill of responsible politicians everywhere will be able to produce new and effective international mechanisms meant to combine the vision of sustainable, environment-friendly development with good governance and the generalized observance of basic human rights.

We see disturbing signs that the increasing polarization with regard to wealth creation goes hand in hand with a deepening knowledge divide. The emerging knowledge economy has scarcely heeded the injunctions of globalization. It still appears to the eyes of many to be self-serving and parochial. However, it is precisely the link between economic development and the advancement of knowledge that should give the

laggards a chance to catch up through a more rational utilization of resources, including intellectual resources. We hope to see a new pattern of open networking which will benefit each country — especially those that are less developed — as well as the international system as a whole. Again, existing institutions do not seem creative or flexible enough to address this challenge. The United Nations system may become the catalyst for concerted action in public-private partnerships to bring the "digital dividend" into every community and every home.

The knowledge gap is compounded by the ubiquitous phenomenon of brain drain from the developing to the developed world. The problem is almost as old as the United Nations itself. How to reverse that trend, transforming it into a "brain regain", is another major challenge facing us all. To put it simply, what we have here is a steady, not-so-hidden flow of subsidies from the poorer nations to the richer ones. After all, most of an education budget comes out of the taxpayer's pocket. Banish the thought of regarding the individual as the property of the all-powerful State: that notion is dead and gone. But it may make sense to start thinking of some sort of legally binding international instruments built on a broader interpretation of the concept of intellectual property to ensure a fairer distribution of the benefits of knowledge.

The European Union has recently regulated the transfer of players between soccer clubs. What about a similar contractual arrangement between, say, "Polytechnic University X Club" and "Microsoft Club"? Some experimental domestic schemes have worked well in linking industry to higher learning by resorting to market mechanisms. Why should we not consider international intellectual partnerships, mutually beneficial for countries having advanced technologies and infrastructure and those generating creative human energies?

Romania supports the strengthening of the United Nations through comprehensive institutional reforms on the basis of the set of proposals now before us. As the Secretary-General rightly noted, the United Nations should turn from a culture of reaction to one of prevention, aiming at the root causes of the prevailing negative phenomena. We look forward to an increasingly effective General Assembly regaining its central position in the United Nations family, as called for in the Millennium Declaration.

Experience shows that enhanced regional cooperation can be both the engine and the result of globalization. In a regional format, States can implement innovative strategies for better access to resources and markets. Regional organizations are poised to become a significant factor in the global community. Regional cooperation makes it possible to capitalize on the advantages of globalization while reducing its risks.

A set of policies can be successful only if it relies consistently on the fundamental aspiration of ordinary people to a peaceful and decent life. The current unprecedented level of knowledge will, I am confident, enable us to find the requisite resources, both in ourselves and in society, for greater tolerance, mutual respect and constructive dialogue, as opposed to the primitive inclination to hatred and intolerance.

It is incumbent on the United Nations, the only international organization of universal vocation, to identify within itself the resources for the resolution of problems of global concern. The United Nations should keep working tenaciously to renew its structures and improve its operational performance as we advance into the new millennium. Romania is ready and willing to add its contribution to that effort.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Romania for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. Percival James Patterson, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Jamaica

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Jamaica.

Mr. Percival James Patterson, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Jamaica, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Jamaica, The Right Honourable Percival James

Patterson, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Patterson (Jamaica): I am delighted to join in the chorus of warm congratulations already expressed before this Assembly to the Secretary-General of our Organization, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the United Nations itself, on the joint award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

We also include in this proud salute those who have fallen in the line of duty, while recognizing those who continue to serve in areas of danger, all for the cause of peace. It is a fitting tribute that that Prize, dedicated to the cause of peace and so richly earned by our Secretary-General in his own right and by the United Nations Organization collectively, has been conferred on them this year. No one doubts that the accolades are truly deserved. They are most fitting at a time when the entire world is in upheaval.

The catastrophic attacks, cynically perpetrated on the International Day of Peace in the city that is host to the United Nations, as well as elsewhere, have, in their wanton slaughter of innocents and awesome destructiveness, sent shock waves around the world. The messiahs of terror have, by the sheer magnitude and horror of their unprecedented crime against humanity, unified nations and people in the determination to remove the spectre of terrorism in all its many forms, wherever it is manifested.

Jamaica stands firmly with the international community on Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) against terrorism. As a member of the Council, we assert, with particular emphasis and deliberation, our unwavering commitment to the cause of ending this pernicious evil.

To defeat the forces of terror, our collective action must be firm, decisive and broad-based. International law must become a binding framework for the total defeat of terrorism. Jamaica welcomes the ongoing efforts to elaborate a draft comprehensive convention against terrorism. We hope that during this session of the General Assembly the momentum will be seized to achieve measurable progress in this critical area. At the same time, the international community needs to take action aimed at achieving the universality of the existing conventions and other instruments against terrorism.

Jamaica is accelerating its domestic action to achieve those objectives, and this morning I was pleased to sign the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

For the past two years, Jamaica has worked with other members of the Council to make peacekeeping operations more efficient; to create strategies for sustained peace-building; to bring warring factions to the peace table and, beyond that, to promote compliance with resulting accords; and to put in place mechanisms for protecting those most affected by situations of conflict, especially the women and children.

We are pleased with the work already undertaken in respect of the Brahimi report on peacekeeping operations. Through a number of tribunals, we have demonstrated that the United Nations will act to end impunity. Despite sustained international efforts, however, several flashpoints still remain.

Jamaica is deeply concerned about the continuing cycle of violence and reprisal in the Middle East. Efforts to achieve a durable ceasefire have been thwarted at every turn. Numerous resolutions of the Security Council have been ignored. We recognize the positive efforts of some permanent members to influence a return to the peace process, but the Security Council should not be marginalized in these initiatives. Jamaica again urges the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to spare no effort in complying with agreements already reached. We call on both parties to remain engaged in the quest for a durable peace.

We dare not neglect the millions of children worldwide who suffer from hunger, disease and ignorance. In situations of conflict, children are the most vulnerable victims. We have all been horrified by their exploitation as child soldiers and by the trafficking and sexual abuse that numerous children have suffered. We have to remember that they constitute the generation of tomorrow, in whose hands will rest the future of international peace and security.

Nor must we forget the importance of humanitarian assistance to the innocent people in conflict-torn areas of the world and to refugees and displaced persons, as well as to those who are victims of natural and man-made disasters. For them, the United Nations must become a beacon of hope for the

peace and stability that will enable them to lead normal and productive lives.

Military strikes cannot by themselves eradicate terrorism. In our response, we need to be mindful that the time has come for us to inaugurate a new era of peace — not simply through preventing war, but by eliminating the causes that give rise to strife and violence. And so I stand at this rostrum today to call for a United Nations renaissance, for a rebirth of this Organization, which will not just permit it to be the harbinger of peace, but which will empower it to foster a climate that will usher in a new age of global development and a dynamic partnership for human prosperity.

We are living in a time of fear, not just in this country or here in this city, but worldwide: fear for the lives of people; fear for the state of economies, national and global; fear that our propensity for wanton destruction may impair the capacity of the planet itself to sustain life. These fears are compounded by other blights — the blights of disease, ignorance and bigotry towards people on the basis of ethnicity, religion and gender; the blight of cruel and autocratic governance in some places; and, most pervasive of all, the blight of poverty.

The expansion of the global economy in the last four decades has not eliminated gross poverty or even reduced its prevalence. A sophisticated, globalized, increasingly affluent world currently co-exists, globally and within countries, with a marginalized underclass.

The hungry, the homeless and the destitute are less impassioned about the physical insecurities of terrorist repression or the damaging consequences of military warfare. The unemployed, those who are ill but have no health care, those who are cold but have no proper heating, those who are old but have no social support — for these victims, "security" means a meal, a roof, a job, medicine, warmth and relief from poverty in general. But those needs are just as real and insistent, and they represent for them the most immediate denial of their rights as human beings.

During the last decade, the process of globalization, deregulation and privatization has swept the world. It is incontrovertible that it has not been a golden age for a large proportion of the world's people: not just for the 1.3 billion absolute poor in developing countries whom the benefits of globalization seem to have bypassed, but for many millions in industrial countries also. We delude ourselves if we believe that all those engaged in street protests, whether in Seattle, Washington, Prague, Quebec city or Rome, are simply anarchists.

International institutions must not only be accountable; they must be subject to democratic governance as well. It is becoming more widely recognized that a new global institutional architecture is needed to establish representative superintendence of the global economy, directed towards enlargement of social and economic justice worldwide and targeted to a sharp redirection of the numbers mired in gross poverty and deprivation.

Some of the desired progress may be possible through existing institutions, but more radical reform may also be required. Democratic superintendence of the global economy has to be a central feature of the fresh global architecture we seek to fashion during this decade. That new global architecture must incorporate appropriate arrangements for a start to be made in raising global resources for global purposes in ways that do not generate alarm. The persistence of gross poverty, the long list of environmental abuses, the disturbing reduction in development aid and the vagaries of foreign private investment make a compelling case for global revenues.

The world faces crucial choices. We have to identify and follow a guiding principle if humanity is to make an enlightened response to the challenges we face. We can hardly return to the principles of a feudal world in which military and economic strength are concentrated in the hands of a few, while we indulge in an illusion of order through the marginalization of the many. In our interdependent, interconnected world, that is no longer a credible option.

Our only way forward lies here in the United Nations. If this institution did not exist before 11 September, we would have to create it now. We have to be inspired by the vision that propelled the generation of 1945 to pursue the path of collective responsibility for peace and human progress through a regime of multilateral action anchored by the United Nations. It was coterie of Governments, in a rare moment of collective wisdom and creativity, that settled the United Nations Charter. It was not without flaws in its inception, and some flaws have remained to hobble its capacity to initiate the renaissance of which I speak.

It is within that context that the demand for the reform of the Security Council becomes even more urgent, since the Council's present design and functioning weaken its capacity to fulfil its mandate. We must remove all existing constraints on the capacity of the United Nations. Even as we work to improve it and to reform it, we must proclaim the United Nations to be the temple in which we can all worship. "We, the people" must be made a reality to fulfil the commitment made in their name by the Charter of 1945.

Today, our greatest hope lies in people: in people of all races, of all genders, of all faiths; people of all continents and oceans; people of all ages; the "ordinary" people of the world and those who hold themselves to be of higher station. All the world's people are affected by the calamities that loom; all must be involved in turning humanity away from gloom and in finding the light.

The Charter does not set out the principal organs of the United Nations in a hierarchical order, but the General Assembly is the only principal organ under the Charter that embraces all the Members on a one member, one vote basis. It is the symbol of the United Nations as a universal organization in the best democratic tradition. And so, I believe that it is within the General Assembly that the true renaissance of the United Nations must begin. The special value of the General Assembly is its universality, its capacity to be a forum in which the voice of every Member State can be raised. It provides the opportunity for countries to ventilate issues, to bring complaints to the floor in the general debate and to suggest new ideas in committees. But the assumption surely must be valid that deliberation should inform action.

High among the changes that should mark the renaissance of the United Nations is the revitalization of the General Assembly as a universal forum of the world's States. Even with a reformed and somewhat enlarged Security Council, many Member States with a capacity to contribute significantly to the policies and programmes of the United Nations and to global governance will have to remain on the sidelines. A General Assembly that occupies more of the stage and reorders its work to make it more focused and more result-oriented, will allow each of us a meaningful role in world governance through our work in the Assembly. It is in the interest of the world community to have a more vigorous and effective General Assembly which can and should play a vital legitimating role in the United Nations, consonant with the universality of its membership.

Here in the General Assembly, we are the practitioners of international affairs. At the heart of the conduct of those affairs must lie a sense of realism. I too am conscious that the accumulated baggage of decades cannot be shed in a single heave. That is why I do not call for reform but advocate instead a renaissance: a rebirth which offers the chance of facing the twenty-first century with sound values no longer predicated on a world of adversarial States but on an interactive world of people that has espoused neighbourhood values of respect for life and liberty, for justice and equity, for tolerance and caring; values that balance rights with responsibilities, that elevate the democratic ethic at both the national and the global levels.

We are a long way from that consummation, however devoutly we may wish it. But we are sufficiently frightened by the prospects that confront us to recognize the need for humanity to take "the path less travelled by". There are enough good people in all our societies — who together are the silent majority of the world's people — to ensure that by choosing this new path we can indeed make a real difference. We have to find a better way than the one a divided world has been pursuing. That way has to lie through the United Nations as an organization — but a United Nations revitalized, its agencies repaired, reformed and responsive to a culture of new values appropriate to our time.

This new era of global relations demands bolder and more ingenious approaches to confidence-building and to development as a prerequisite for international peace and security. An equitable framework to finance national and global development, to fuel expansion of international trade and to foster sustainable development must be placed on the front burner, whether we gather in Qatar, in Mexico or in South Africa.

If the global conferences to be held in those three places are to succeed, Member States must be guided by full recognition that this new era of global relations demands, as I said, more ingenious approaches to confidence-building and to development as a precondition for international peace and security.

In closing, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Han on his assumption of the presidency of this session of the General Assembly and to commit Jamaica's total support for the attainment of our common goals in the service of all humankind.

Whatever may be our colour, culture or creed, we belong to a single race — that is, the human race. We occupy a single planet, which has more than enough to enable each person and every nation to enjoy the abundance which Mother Earth has to offer and for all its people to dwell together in harmony.

Now more than at any time in its history, the United Nations is the best vehicle to procure global peace and to foster international cooperation. Let this, the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, loudly and clearly proclaim that the renaissance of the United Nations has indeed begun.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Defence of Jamaica for the statement he has just made.

The Right Honourable Percival James Patterson, MP, Prime Minister and Minister for Defence of Jamaica, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Alhaji Aliu Mahama, Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by Mr. Alhaji Aliu Mahama, Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana.

Mr. Alhaji Aliu Mahama, Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Alhaji Aliu Mahama, Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana, and I invite him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Mahama (Ghana): Mr. Han's election to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly is a tribute to his vast experience and accomplished diplomatic skills. It is also an honour to his country, the Republic of Korea, with which my country enjoys the most cordial and friendly relations. I ask him to please accept our congratulations.

May I also express our gratitude and appreciation to his immediate predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, for the able manner in which he guided the work of the fifty-fifth session.

I wish to express the heartfelt gratitude of the Government and the people of Ghana to the States Members of the United Nations for having placed their trust and the destiny of this universal Organization once again in the hands of an illustrious son of Ghana and of Africa, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the next five years.

The Nobel Peace Prize, awarded jointly to the Secretary-General and the United Nations, is in recognition of their devotion to the pursuit of global peace and security. On this occasion, I can only endorse the sentiments expressed by Mr. Annan that the award should serve as an impetus to record greater achievements in the service of humanity.

The last century witnessed laudable achievements in the political, economic, scientific and technological spheres. Despite these positive developments, history, in the end, will remember it for the numerous conflicts that marked it, with their attendant socio-economic disruptions, environmental degradation, the emergence of hitherto-unknown diseases and the persistence of poverty among the majority of our people.

The tragic terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 awakened the world to the new challenges confronting international peace and security. The fight against terrorism must be a collective action, guided by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and of international law. Ghana welcomes the international community's response in confronting this threat to peace and security. We also applaud the swift response of the Security Council and of the General Assembly, which not only condemned the attacks, but also took measures aimed at confronting terrorism. Resolution 1373 (2001), which outlines the measures that all countries — irrespective of size, wealth or might — should adopt to forestall and combat terrorism must be pursued by all peace-loving nations.

As we forge ahead, our quest to free the world of terrorism will be enhanced if we adequately address both the symptoms and the underlying causes that give rise to such criminal acts. Developing countries should be provided with the necessary resources to play a meaningful role in confronting these challenges.

The recent threats and crimes against humanity have reinforced our belief in the need for the early establishment of the International Criminal Court, in order to enable the global community to deal appropriately with such phenomena. We therefore urge all Member States that have not yet ratified the Statute to do so to enable it to enter into force.

The proliferation of conventional weapons, notably small arms and light weapons, has been of great concern to the Government and the people of Ghana. They are now the weapons of choice and the tools for promoting violence and conflicts in Africa. Such weapons have always been used against the most vulnerable in society, especially women and children.

We therefore welcome the Programme of Action adopted at the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. While it does not respond to all of our concerns or meet all of our expectations, we still consider it to be the beginning of a process that will lead to an internationally binding instrument on managing and controlling such weapons.

Conflicts, particularly in the developing world, have robbed us of the opportunity to improve the circumstances of our people. Sustainable development can be achieved only in an environment of peace and security. Ghana will continue to live up to its Charter obligations and to play an active role in international peacekeeping, with a view to assisting the United Nations in its task of maintaining global peace and security.

Only a year ago, world leaders, at the Millennium Summit, committed themselves to providing leadership to create a better world, one which would uphold human dignity, equality and equity at the global level, through the elimination of poverty and the creation of a conducive environment for development.

To achieve this, it is imperative that the international community take steps to assist countries that have created the necessary environment for sound economic development. This will enable them to reach their potential for sustained growth through conducive policies concerning debt, market access, transfer of technology, increased flows of capital and foreign direct investment, and enhanced official development assistance.

It is important, particularly at this moment when the fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization is taking place in Doha, to emphasize the critical role of global trade in generating the resources for financing development in developing countries. The outcome of the Doha Conference, our commitment to pursuing the decisions and processes emanating from that Conference, the implementation of the commitments made in the Uruguay Round and how we address intellectual property rights should clearly determine our commitment to eradicating poverty throughout the world.

We believe that the success of our efforts at the global level will depend largely on the quality of governance in our respective countries. We cannot claim to uphold the dignity of every human being or make claims to social equity if we fail to uphold democracy and the rule of law, combat corruption and strengthen the institutions of governance. It is therefore gratifying to note that in the past few years democracy has begun to take root in Africa. This trend should be encouraged and consolidated with support from the international community.

It is for this reason that Ghana fully endorsed the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which, among other things, rejects unconstitutional changes of Government and reaffirms respect for democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law and good governance. The decisions we took in Lusaka during the last summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on the African Union and the New Partnership for African Development have reasserted Africa's leadership and responsibility for the continent's development agenda. Ghana intends to play its part through positive diplomacy and cooperation with other African countries to accelerate regional integration and make Africa a zone of economic empowerment.

Africa accepts its primary responsibility for its own development. However, the contribution of its development partners will continue to be crucial. In this connection, the outcomes of the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held next year in Monterrey, Mexico, and of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg, will be critical tests of our willingness to tackle concretely the challenges we set for ourselves in the Millennium Declaration.

At the onset of the new millennium, we hope that gender issues will continue to engage the attention of the international community. The adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in 1995, and the subsequent adoption of further actions and initiatives by the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, last year, indicate the universal recognition of the need to empower women as partners in socio-economic development. As a result of the great importance that Ghana attaches to the advancement of women, our Government has elevated the national machinery for the advancement of women into a full-fledged ministry headed by a cabinet minister. We are determined, through practical measures, to make our women full and effective partners in the development of our country.

Ghana welcomes the remarkable success achieved by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session with the adoption, after protracted negotiations, of the resolutions on the scale of assessments for the regular and peacekeeping budgets. It is therefore our considered view that both resolutions should ensure the financial solvency and viability of the Organization.

In conclusion, I wish to reassure the Assembly of Ghana's abiding commitment to the United Nations and its ideals. The Organization is the best means available for maintaining international peace and security and promoting fruitful international cooperation. We must all resolve to strengthen our will to make it more effective and to redeem the majority of our people from wars, disease and poverty by providing it with financial and material resources commensurate with its responsibilities.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hubert Védrine, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France.

Mr. Védrine (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, it is a great pleasure for me to congratulate the President on his election, which is a sign of the esteem in which he and his country are held.

Coming after his re-election to a second term — which is a sign of the general confidence he has earned — the Nobel Peace Prize that has been awarded to the Secretary-General is a well-deserved tribute to his work and, through him, to the United Nations Organization as a whole, thereby inspiring greater hope than ever before.

On this my third visit to New York since the tragedy of 11 September, I also want to express once again my profound emotion and pay homage to the people of New York, who are being so severely tested, and to their courageous mayor, who is now finishing his term.

The unprecedented magnitude and gravity of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September warrant our unfailing solidarity and an exceptional response. In its resolution 1368 (2001), which was adopted unanimously, the Security Council rightly qualified those acts as attacks and, hence, as legitimately meriting a defensive response under Article 51 of the Charter. The United States is thus entirely within its legal and political rights in carrying out its targeted military response against the terrorist organizations responsible for those acts. The military action under way was therefore inevitable, and must be pursued until all its objectives have been achieved. Given the preliminary results achieved yesterday, I hope that those objectives will be met as soon as possible. The leaders of these terrorist networks and those who support them must be decisively prevented from committing further harm.

But that military action should, as a matter of course, form part of an overarching strategy that includes immediate, broad-scale humanitarian action that is better adapted to the needs of people in distress. France has put forward several proposals in this regard and supports the current initiatives for better coordination. That overarching strategy should also include a political solution — something that has now become urgent — and strive to ensure that the demise of the Taliban regime does not lead to factional infighting and chaos; and it must once again make the Afghan people masters of their own future. That is the aim of the action plan for Afghanistan that France proposed back on 1 October, and of the other contributions it has made with the same goals in mind.

We await Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi's proposals with interest; they should set forth broad outlines of action for the United Nations. On these bases, the Security Council should be able to adopt a framework resolution within a few days, endorsing Mr. Brahimi's proposals and spelling out the modalities of United Nations support for the establishment of an Afghan Government representative of the various constituents of the population. There is no question of imposing on Afghanistan some ready-made solution concocted by

outsiders. I call on all the constituents of the Afghan nation and all neighbouring countries to heed the general interest of Afghanistan and its people. This is compatible with respect for the legitimate interests of the various parties concerned and it is the only way to turn our backs on the past.

Beyond immediate military, diplomatic and humanitarian action, our common fight against terrorism needs to be pursued in all its forms, including police, judicial and others. The United Nations will have a crucial role to play in this difficult struggle, laying down universal obligations for each State and the framework for our action. A series of conventions has already been concluded, particularly the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, which I proposed in this very place in 1999. We must speed up the signature and ratification of those conventions. The General Assembly must quickly conclude the negotiations on the comprehensive convention on international terrorism. For its part, the Security Council should oversee the coordinated implementation by States of its resolution 1373 (2001).

Action against terrorism also needs to be carried out through other organizations, in conjunction with the United Nations and consistent with its policies. For its part, the European Union (EU) has just taken unprecedented steps to strengthen police and judicial cooperation among its member States, including the creation of a European arrest warrant. An ambitious action plan has been agreed. The 29 members of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) have decided to extend the fight against money-laundering to the fight against the financing of terrorism. Beyond that, I propose the creation of a dialogue forum to move us in this direction. Several other organizations, too, will have a role to play, so that at the end of the day every country will be making a contribution.

Leaving aside the hoped-for short-term results, the obstacles notwithstanding, we will not achieve lasting victory against all forms of terrorism unless we succeed in depriving terrorists of their breeding ground and eliminating the pretexts from which they fallaciously draw their justification, and unless we eradicate them in the true sense of the term. That implies nothing short of changing our world. And let no one claim that this would be tantamount to justifying the terrorists. For neither my country, nor Europe, nor the United Nations — in other words, none of us — waited for 11 September to discover, condemn and seek to remedy the ills of the world. Yet how many good intentions have come to naught? How many resolutions have gone unimplemented? How many announcements have failed to materialize, which now feed a sense of bitterness and incomprehension? It is pointless to condemn or deny the theory of a clash of civilizations. Rather, we must fight against such a risk, which is by no means wholly imaginary, and against those who would make it a reality.

This should be one more pressing reason for us all to find a solution to regional crises, particularly in the Middle East. Since 1982, France has called for the creation of a Palestinian State. Naturally, it would have to be viable, democratic and peaceful, and it should give credible undertakings as regards Israel's security. Guarantees will be needed, yet the Palestinian State is not the problem; it is the solution for reasons based on rights, humanity and security. Such is the EU's common stance today. This morning, before the Assembly, President Bush himself has made this his objective. It is the path of reason — the only path that can halt the murderous spiral of conflict between the two peoples.

Admittedly, responsibility for a lasting peace agreement lies first and foremost with the protagonists. Unless they make the move, no one else will be able to overcome their fears and resentment and put an end to the suffering of these two peoples. Yet, the increasing threat that this conflict poses to international peace and security requires that those who have the will and the means join forces in a push for peace, given that the main players are evidently unable to do so unaided.

The urgency of the situation in the Near East obviously should not make us forget Iraq. Regional security still needs to be secured by restoring an international monitoring capability and by alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people through the lifting of the embargo on civilian goods. I hope the discussions now in progress in the Security Council will finally bring this about.

Nor should we forget the Caucasus, where ancient quarrels live on and where new ones are rising to the fore. Yet, here again there is no other way than to seek negotiated political solutions.

In the Balkans, we realized that international involvement must be sustainable. Thanks to it, and thanks to new leaders, noteworthy progress has been

achieved towards democracy, reconciliation and regional cooperation over the last two years. We must make sure these positive changes are not challenged by outmoded patterns of behaviour. We must maintain and pursue the Europeanization of the Balkans.

Turning to the Great Lakes region, we know that the lasting resolution of the conflict, which involves more than eight countries, will be a negotiated solution that will ensure the restoration of the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and include as well safeguard clauses to protect the security of each of the States. The Lusaka Agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions provide the framework for ending this crisis, but they should be applied as quickly as possible. To halt the illegal use of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which often occurs in association with forced child labour, should be an immediate priority.

In all the cases I have just referred to briefly — and there are others — the problem we have to resolve is the coexistence of peoples who are at once close and antagonistic, deeply affected and divided by history and separated by fear and the spirit of revenge. We will achieve this only through perseverance and a clear understanding of each particular situation, guided by the principles of the United Nations.

Even if we managed to resolve all these regional crises and others as well, our task would still not be over because, at the global level, the gulf between intentions for the world as stated at international meetings and actual realities is becoming intolerable for many peoples. We must redouble our efforts to create humane globalization. We saw this in Seattle, we saw it in Genoa, and even more so in Durban. We can see it in the reactions to the Afghan crisis and to many other issues. Despite the United Nations and our good resolutions, there is still no real universal consensus. What we call "the international community" has yet to be built. Is this a reason to throw in the towel? To the contrary – absolutely not. France has long been determined to add its stone to this edifice. We have already put forward numerous proposals to that end and will continue to do so, with increased conviction.

Need I recall our well-known major objectives for the world?

First, we must achieve a fairer distribution of wealth; 3 billion people currently live on less than 2 dollars per day, and the global income gap between the richest and the poorest has doubled over the last 40 years.

Second, we must end impunity.

Third, we must guarantee sustainable development everywhere — "sustainable", that little word that makes all the difference, or which should make all the difference. The World Summit in Johannesburg in September 2002 will provide an opportunity to affirm a vision and a benchmark of development based on three intimately linked pillars: economic, social and environmental.

Fourth, we must help refugees and fully respect the right of asylum.

Fifth, we must manage population movements in a humanitarian manner.

Sixth, we must draft international standards in a democratic way to ensure that they are entirely legitimate and that everyone will consequently be bound to comply with them.

Seventh, we must no longer tolerate situations of human distress. State sovereignty, which remains an essential feature of the international system, cannot, in extreme emergencies, be regarded as an absolute principle serving as a pretext for inaction. The Security Council must be able to fully assume its responsibilities in cases of gross human rights violations, for these also pose threats to international peace and security.

Eighth, we must aim at promoting balanced and negotiated disarmament, which strengthens security and strategic stability.

Ninth, we must strive to allow all languages, cultures and civilizations to exist while maintaining a dialogue with one another.

Tenth, we must seek to improve the state of health worldwide, which for one thing means devoting more resources to combating HIV/AIDS. I would hope that the new Global AIDS and Health Fund will be made operational by the beginning of 2002.

But we are undoubtedly now more aware than in recent years that the attainment of these objectives, which are both indispensable, and very ambitious, calls different rules and different mechanisms, starting with the reform and enlargement of the Security Council, which we have waited for all too long; with respect for

the role of the General Assembly; with the ratification of the major multilateral instruments — I am thinking of the Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Kyoto Protocol, among others; with a more appropriate and less indiscriminate use of sanctions when they are needed; with a clarification of the respective and legitimate roles of Governments and civil society; with an agreement on the modalities of interference to deal with large-scale and extreme emergency situations; with a regulation and development round at the World Trade Organization (WTO), which is starting today in Doha; with closer cooperation and greater consistency between the WTO and the International Labour Organization; with the creation of a world environmental organization; and with reform of the international financial institutions. I shall stop this list here. I could go on, for there is so much that remains to be done.

All of us, as Members of the United Nations, are faced with this challenge. But I do not hesitate to say here that the rich countries — in other words, the West and a handful of other countries from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, where some 1.135 billion men and women live, have even more responsibility than others. Now that the illusions of the last 10 years have been dispelled, the choice before us is harsh, but clear: either a world so unjust that we have conflict with no foreseeable end, or, on the contrary, an international community of the United Nations, at last worthy of the name, to solve together humanity's common problems and ensure its future. But building this community, instead of just talking about it or yearning for it, will mean for some of us giving up privileges, sharing wealth and power in new ways, and rewriting certain rules hitherto held to be inviolable. As the Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz has written, free trade was designed by Western countries for the Western countries. This is debatable, of course, but none of this will happen without sacrifices, above all on the part of the rich and powerful countries.

At this very moment, a reshuffling of diplomatic cards on a grand scale is under way between the United States, Russia, China, Europe, the Arab or Muslim world, the other coalition partners, the rest of the world and the United Nations. I hope — I truly hope — that this will help to bring about a vital awakening and that my country, Europe and the United Nations will follow new avenues, in deeds and not just words, and that all of us, together, will successfully extend the needed coalition against terrorism to turn it into a coalition for an equitable world, and that this will lay the groundwork for a renewal of the international system.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Juli Minoves-Triquell, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Andorra.

Mr. Minoves-Triquell (Andorra) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election to the presidency of the Assembly and to express our thanks to his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and the United Nations on their well-deserved Nobel Peace Prize.

(*spoke in French*)

We are compelled to take up the events of 11 September and the actions initiated by our Organization, starting with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), at our discussions here today. I have chosen to make my statement in a language not of my country — English, the language of our host country and city — in tribute to the United States, to the American people and Government and to New York City, which were harmed by the recent terrorist attacks.

(*spoke in English*)

We meet today almost two months after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City. The horror of this attack, the thousands dead: so many terrible images have been seared into our collective memory. And we remember also the remarkable acts of courage and determination that followed in the wake of this shameful crime.

That the attack took place here, in New York, the seat of the United Nations, is both painful and sad. For New York is an immigrant's city that welcomes with open arms all races and all creeds from our world. The list of the victims of the attack, from so many different countries, attests to the remarkable and joyous diversity that makes New York. She is truly the capital of the world, and the right place, the only place, for its United Nations.

We know that this very building might have been a target for the terrorists, and that in an earlier terrorist

attack of 1993, the United Nations was on the list. This seems to me proof, if any is needed, that the United States of America is not the only object of terrorism. Rather, it is the idea of tolerance and religious and cultural diversity, symbolized both by New York City and by the United Nations, that is the object of the rage of a small group of men — men who live and die by terror and who have turned away from political debate to violence and death.

And so all of us here must play our part in the battle against mindless killing, and debate both the reasons for and the responses to terrorism. If there are disagreements and disputes, we should never forget that the very act of debate — the very idea of this forum — is anathema to those whose modus operandi is silence. What is telling, in my opinion, is not the identity of the perpetrator — we are quite certain who is responsible, although we have only begun to consider why — but the fact that the perpetrators, dead and alive, never admitted responsibility for their actions.

I would thus like to express the views of my country, the Principality of Andorra, in this debate. Andorra is a small country created in 1278 by a pact of peace, and is blessed with seven centuries of peace and a parliamentary system that started in 1419. We Andorrans like to think of our country as an example of tolerance and coexistence of different creeds and nationalities. Through the centuries, we have welcomed scores of refugees from European wars persecuted in their homelands for their ideas. Our Constitution, which enshrines the secularity of the State, includes a far-reaching bill of rights that highlights democracy and the rule of law. Let me therefore reaffirm, as our President, Marc Forné, stated immediately after the attacks, Andorra's condemnation of these crimes.

My country has taken appropriate measures to combat terrorism in all its forms, and I will be signing the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Conventions of the Council of Europe against terrorism and corruption.

Let me assert Andorra's belief in the role of debate rather than violence as a necessary response to violence — its belief that the United Nations is a vital forum for world conversation, a forum whose principles, and indeed whose buildings, need to be celebrated and protected.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Let us therefore ask ourselves what it is these terrorists want. In the videotape he released the day the American bombing began, their leader announced the following goals: first, the removal of American troops from Saudi Arabia; secondly, an end to the bombing of Iraq; and, finally, a resolution of the Palestinian problem.

It is worthwhile to note that both the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia and the bombing of Iraq are the direct result of prior aggression. The international community has for decades sought a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, but a solution, if one is to be found, must come first and foremost from within Israel and Palestine. Their peace, if it is to be reached, cannot be imposed from without.

While these are the proclaimed reasons for the hostility of the terrorist networks to the United States, one might come to the conclusion that these stated objectives are a screen, and that the attacks were made in order to bring about religious wars in the twenty-first century.

For the United States and its allies, it is a war against terrorism. But the terrorist networks claim it is a religious war, pitting Christianity against Islam. The old rhetoric of the Crusades, such as the loss of Al-Andalus — Andalusia — in 1492 and other battles from history are being invoked by the terrorists to inflame the feelings of Muslims throughout the world and to bring about a fundamentalist pan-Islamic entity. This is a delicate issue but we must face it head-on. This crisis can be contained only if we speak bluntly and rationally.

The terrorist networks invoke history — the history of religious war — to inflame sentiment. Their invocation of history, however, may be a tactical error. For history can be our ally in the battle against terrorism and violence.

I beg your pardon, but let us return to an earlier point in history, a bloody time of religious crisis in Europe — and I am speaking about the wars of religion that decimated sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe. Out of these wars of religion and out of the bloody struggles of the Reformation came a powerful

antidote to religious violence that we call humanism. The great French humanist Michel de Montaigne was a sceptic. He wrote about the limits to human knowledge in his remarkable *Essays*. In one of them, entitled "Of Practice," he observed that, although we can practice for many things in life, there is one thing for which we cannot practice, one thing we cannot know, and that is our own death. He went on to describe the closest he came to knowing death, an accident that happened when he fell from his horse. He had been out riding in a militia and was nearly crushed to death. He had a brief sensation of his soul hovering over his body, and, later, after being taken home, terrible pain continued to plague him.

At a time of religious extremism, when Catholics and Protestants were fighting over the keys to heaven — just as the 11 September terrorists died believing they would enter paradise — Montaigne wrote about the limits of knowledge. And he wrote about a personal experience, this accident, with which everybody, even now, can empathize. This is why he is called a humanist, because of his genuine interest in human experience.

There is no revealed truth in Montaigne, no dogmatism, only human scepticism that appears as an antidote — the only antidote — to the certainty of madmen who would kill for belief. This evolution in human thought was accomplished without sacrificing the freedom to believe, to have faith in God and to practice a religion. To think and write as Montaigne did — that is, to insist on the limits of knowledge, and to speak not in a universal but in a personal voice — was a great step forward for humankind. In turning knowledge away from religious certainty, the humanists allowed for a new field of understanding that we now call the sciences.

While inquisitions would carry on for a century — Galileo was a boy when Montaigne was writing — the scepticism that Montaigne advanced against religious violence in 1580 is the same as that which Boyle, Newton, or Lavoisier would apply to the universal truths of natural theology in order to create a way of understanding that we now recognize as scientific. Modern scientific understanding ushered in the industrial revolutions, the astonishing explosion of the middle class, of print culture and of the establishment of modern democracies. It introduced all of these "world-historical" events, to use Hegel's term that we call, rather sloppily, "modernity."

I conclude my intervention on the subject of modernity, because many commentators on the current war in Afghanistan see the war framed as a war between the Taliban, as Islamic extremists, and modernity. They cite the way in which the Taliban have banned all forms of mass media culture and have insisted on a literal application of *sharia* law. They argue that the Taliban are anti-modern and that their regime is trying to return its people to an earlier, pre-modern way of life. Yet, when we examine the lives of the 11 September terrorists, we realize first that they were not Afghans, and second, that they were not the wretched of the earth. They were from the middle class. Most were students, some with advanced degrees. They never even had to work hard for a living, like most members of the middle class. These men were privileged murderers. Or let me put it another way: they were fully modern.

The struggle between modernity and the anti-modern is not anachronistic. To be a terrorist demands that you enter, systematically and rationally, into the modern world and to turn its apparatus, such as transportation and communication, against it. The struggle against modernity is one of the most romantic myths generated by modernity itself. So, too, is the misrepresentation of the poor by certain writers and intellectuals — I need not name names — who claim to speak for them. The suffering sown in Afghanistan by decades of invasion and civil war, they argue, has brought terrorism as its terrible harvest. In fact, these poor want most of all to live, and to live well. They embrace modernity and its comforts. But violence, the ability to treat other people as objects, as things to be crushed and destroyed: this is a gift bestowed by education.

The struggle is therefore ideological. This is why education, the greatest gift, was a passport to terrorism for these men. The risk of education in this context is that the pressure of knowledge, or more precisely a recognition of uncertainties and of the limits of knowledge, will tempt the student into dogmatic belief. The danger always exists that education can harden from humanistic scepticism into the rock of dogma.

What is to be done? Today I propose an urgent return to a new humanism on two fronts: first, within Islam, a humanism among Muslims — politicians, writers, readers — that can dampen sectarian violence and that can reach out to religious extremism to find common ground. This can only come from within the

Islamic world. It does not have to be secular in nature, although secularism has an important yet increasingly threatened status within certain nations. Correspondingly, there must be recognition within political regimes everywhere that antipathy to political dissent politicizes religion and creates more problems for these regimes than it solves. Modernity's belief in democracy as a means to popular expression has never proved more vital.

Secondly, outside of Islam, a return to humanism lies at the heart of the modernity in which we are living. To recognize modernity and its great contribution, a secular and universal culture — mass culture — is something that needs to be protected and fought for. It is a modernity that insists on the rights of men, women and children.

We all know that words often do not lead to action. But we forget that words, the expression of ideas and of criticism, are a vital form of action. We cannot be simplistic in our desire for a direct relationship between debate and resolution.

What I am proposing is certainly not propaganda; rather, it is a worldwide debate on the importance of debate, in which human scepticism, a recognition of the limits of belief, is very much at stake. Whether this argument can be made in an urgent and anti-elitist way is very much the point. But unless we are able to recognize modernity as a liberating experience, independent of its accumulation of goods and services, creature comforts, and the like, I have little hope for a positive resolution to the crisis we now face.

Modernity is a work in process. One name for modernity, as it exists for us today, is globalization. This is the creation of a "world culture", the entry of technology into every aspect of our lives, the omnipresence of the media and the increasing speed by which culture and information are communicated. It seems to me that there is tragic confusion between globalization and abstract and oppressive technology. It is this notion of modernity that seems to be at the heart of the recent protests against globalization, protests that would have been the focus of our debates before 11 September. While the protesters have many valid points to make, and they need to be listened to, globalization and modernity are not the problem. Whether cooperation between nations is economic, political or cultural, it is not a threat. Leaders and intellectuals need to reach out and embrace the limits of knowledge. They must speak out against dogmatism to unravel facile notions of monolithic governments or global compacts.

An eye for an eye, that harsh principle from the Old Testament, will soon leave us blind. Blindness, rather than insight, is the curse of the ideologue, of people who do not want to see outside their own skins, their ideas or their place. It is the curse of people who do not want to see the world in its marvellous diversity, its uncertainty and its possibilities. To see this world, we have only to look around us here, now. We have only to wander through the streets of this miraculous city of New York.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to The Honourable John Manley, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Mr. Manley (Canada): It is indeed an honour to be here in New York City and at the General Assembly. That we are gathered here now, just two months since the devastating terrorist attacks of 11 September, demonstrates both the resilience of this great city and the determination and defiance of a united global community.

Having spent last Sunday — like my friend Prime Minister Dzurinda of Slovakia — running through so many streets and communities of the five boroughs of New York City in the annual New York City Marathon, I have witnessed personally and been quite overwhelmed by the deep reserves of courage evident in this city and in all those individuals who are choosing to take back their lives and reject the menace of terror.

Our job is to galvanize and to focus the courage of nations — to transform sentiment into commitment, and commitment into action. Expressions of a common outrage are gratifying but they will never be enough to defeat terrorism. The ultimate success of our campaign — this long and extremely complex campaign — rests upon our collective ability to demonstrate leadership, to harness political will and to sustain the commitment that we have made to each other and to our citizens: that we will not allow crimes so vile, so immense and so shattering to the world to be unanswered or ever to be repeated.

In order to achieve these goals — and to merit the trust and fulfil the expectations placed in the United Nations and its constituent Member States — we

cannot go on as before. There can be no more "business as usual". There is no more time, there is no more patience and there are no more resources for diplomatic gamesmanship and the stoking of dangerous self-interest. National Governments must take responsibility and be held accountable for their actions and decisions — for fighting terrorism, for undertaking political and legal reforms, for resolving disputes and for establishing the conditions in which democracy flourishes and development is sustained.

(*spoke in French*)

The United Nations is now facing its greatest test ever since its creation. So far, the United Nations is performing admirably. The unity of purpose and effective decision-making that allowed swift passage of the landmark Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and the rapid convening of a special debate on terrorism provide clear evidence of what we can accomplish together, and further underscore the reasons why this Organization and its esteemed Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, were deservedly recognized with the Nobel Peace Prize this year.

(*spoke in English*)

We cannot, however, afford to lose ourselves in complacency, self-congratulation or distraction. Our work has only just begun.

Horrific as the atrocities perpetrated on 11 September were, terrorism did not begin here. Unfortunately, too many of us in this Hall know this all too painfully. No, it did not begin here; but we as a global community have the responsibility, and now a renewed opportunity, to ensure that we end it — here.

The United Nations has a unique and indispensable role to play. While the campaign against terrorism will be conducted through coalitions of different State actors, alliances and organizations, this is where it must ultimately all come together in its political, diplomatic, legal, economic, humanitarian and security dimensions. We in Canada, as long-standing proponents of multilateralism and the United Nations system, have strongly welcomed the close collaboration evident between the United States Administration and the United Nations over these last two months.

In Canada, the campaign against terrorism, including the obligations we have undertaken here at the United Nations, is our highest priority. Our country, which shares with the United States the longest unmilitarized border in the world and the closest, most extensive and most profitable bilateral relationship anywhere, has been deeply affected by this crisis. Canadians, like Americans and citizens of many other nations, are concerned about their security, but also about what kind of a country and what kind of a world they are to live in after 11 September. The interlinked goals of protecting our citizens, providing assurance to our partners and allies and preserving the character of our free, democratic and diverse society have guided the actions and decisions of Prime Minister Chrétien and the Canadian Government throughout this crisis.

We have committed 2000 armed forces personnel, ships, aircraft and special forces to the international military coalition against terrorism; and at home, we have introduced a wide range of measures, legislation and new investments to bolster our security framework, including at the border and at our airports.

Canada welcomes the reporting and monitoring functions provided for in Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). We have already implemented many of its provisions and are moving quickly on the rest. We are well advanced in the preparation of our report and will provide it to the Counter-Terrorism Committee well ahead of the 90-day deadline. We urge other Member nations to demonstrate their continued resolve and solidarity by doing likewise. Canada is prepared to support those States for which implementation poses a great challenge.

As we take steps in compliance with resolution 1373 (2001), we are completing our ratification of the Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings and the Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, which will make Canada a full party to all 12 existing United Nations counter-terrorism conventions. Negotiations are under way on the thirteenth convention, the comprehensive convention against international terrorism. That convention will ensure that all terrorist acts are condemned under international law. What is needed now is the political will to complete the negotiations. If not the General Assembly of the United Nations, then who? And if not now, then when? The time will never be more propitious, or the need greater.

Our international legal framework also requires a strong arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Implementation of the Ottawa Convention

banning anti-personnel mines is proceeding apace. To keep weapons of mass destruction from becoming employed as the instruments of evil, we are also hard at work to reinforce key instruments such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, all requiring strong multilateral action to ensure their full implementation.

I would also add that we are now very close to making the International Criminal Court a reality, with only 17 more ratifications to go. The creation of the Court will represent an extremely significant step in the ongoing struggle to eliminate impunity for the worst crimes known to humankind.

These are only the most immediate and most obvious steps to ensure our collective security, but our agenda must be far broader than this. Nothing has more violently shaken our sense of security than have the events of 11 September. But our conception of what constitutes security and the nature of the threats that may be posed to it was already undergoing dramatic evolution prior to the attacks.

The denial of human rights, the spread of HIV/AIDS, persistent mass poverty, unchecked environmental degradation and the blight of drugs and crime all undermine stability, reduce human potential and obstruct social and economic progress. They are threats to human security, as are discrimination and racism, which the Durban Conference was intended to address. Unfortunately, it failed to achieve its potential and instead provided a forum for propagating long-standing hatreds and biases, and the world is poorer for that.

The resolution and prevention of conflict must also remain at the highest order of United Nations business, but leadership and commitment are required if we are to move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention, as proposed by the Secretary-General.

Just a week ago, I ended a five-country visit to the Middle East. I was reassured by the commitments of my hosts to the fight against terrorism. As have others, I urged Israel and the Palestinians to put immediately into place measures that will bring them back to the negotiating table. That is their only way forward. The essential truth is that there is no alternative to peaceful coexistence. That conflict cannot go on forever and leaders must act now to bring it to an end. The international community must also increase its efforts to help bring about a just peace.

Finally, there is little that is more debilitating to humankind than the ravages of extreme poverty. This is most notable in Africa, which will be a principal focus for the G-8 in 2002, when Canada will assume the G-8 chair. Speaking at this rostrum in 1963, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, warned the world of the dangers of a growing disparity in economic and social development between nations. He urged that this "must be corrected before it creates an unbridgeable gulf between 'have' and 'have-not' nations" (*A/PV.1208, para. 60*). That was 38 years ago and the challenge remains more acute than ever.

The pledges of the Millennium Summit in September 2000 must not be overshadowed by the urgency of the events that have taken place one year later. Indeed, their fulfilment can and must form an integral component of how we create a strong, equitable global environment that can be neither attacked nor exploited by terrorists.

Terrorism does not speak to us; it does not speak for anyone but criminals and murderers and it only serves to undermine the causes they purport to represent. It does not represent Islam; it does not reflect the will of the Afghan people.

(*spoke in French*)

The fate of the Afghan people must remain sharply in our focus. That country has been so neglected, so abused and so driven into isolation by its self-appointed rulers that it could not even be ranked on the most recent United Nations human development index. The rights of its people — notably women and girls — have been blatantly and repeatedly violated.

(*spoke in English*)

An acute humanitarian crisis is building and we must do more, working with United Nations agencies and other relief organizations, to ensure that civilians — including refugees and internally displaced persons — are protected and have access to food and to aid.

For this reason, Canada responded to the United Nations humanitarian appeal, adding further resources to the $160 million in aid that we had already provided over the last 10 years. We were also pleased at the prompt appointment of Lakhdar Brahimi — who has

played such an integral role in the reform of United Nations peacekeeping — as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan. Canada has pledged to work with Ambassador Brahimi and other coalition States to support the Afghan people in the search for a stable, fair and effective administration that can begin the enormous task of leading Afghanistan forward to a more secure and hopeful future.

The opportunities for progress towards a more free, prosperous and peaceful world have always been before us. In the haze of self-interest and competing priorities, sometimes our global community has not seen them so clearly. The enormous horror of 11 September has offered us that clarity, just as it has concentrated minds and catalysed relationships. It has given us a renewed basis for cooperation between States both in and outside the United Nations, driven not only by the United States and its traditional allies, including Canada, but also through opportunities for leadership provided to Russia and China, to India and Pakistan, to countries of the Middle East, North Africa, Asia and elsewhere in the resolution of this crisis.

Terrorism globalizes us. It globalizes outrage and condemnation, just as it does compassion and the cry for justice. We must ensure that terrorism also globalizes a sustained commitment to bringing about its end.

Tomorrow, 11 November, Canada and other United Nations Member nations will mark our annual Remembrance Day. On this day, we remember and honour the men and women who have fought and sacrificed for our freedom. This week in New York, I hope that we will all take time to remember what it is that we are together working — and, yes, fighting — for today: for freedom, for peace and for justice, and for the dignity and realization of the potential of all peoples everywhere.

As we make our speeches, file our papers and press forward our resolutions in this great Hall, let us also remember that the words "United Nations" — coined by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942 — not only refer to an Organization or a name on a building, but were first and foremost a declaration of solidarity and of a common vision for a better world.

The Acting President: I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Mr. Stanislaus Mudenge.

Mr. Mudenge (Zimbabwe): My delegation congratulates Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. His election to that office is a demonstration of the confidence and trust that the international community has placed in him to steer it through the challenges of our time. It is our fervent hope that, through his leadership, this Assembly will translate the Millennium Declaration into reality.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, for the sterling work accomplished during the past session of the Assembly.

Today, I am privileged to join others in congratulating Mr. Kofi Annan for his re-election as United Nations Secretary-General for a second term. Mr. Annan's re-election is indeed both a testimony to and recognition of his unique and rare abilities to give leadership, vision and unity of purpose to the international community in meeting the challenges that face us today. This recognition has been amply demonstrated by the conferment of the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize on the person of the Secretary-General and on the United Nations. I congratulate both Mr. Annan and the United Nations.

The Secretary-General enters the elite corps of Nobel laureates at a time of most serious challenge to international solidarity and cooperation, as we reflect on the events of 11 September, when the people of the United States of America, and indeed the whole world, were plunged into unprecedented sorrow in the wake of the heinous terrorist attacks here in New York and in Washington. This is indisputably the most brutal act of terrorism in this new millennium. Our hearts go out to the families who lost their loved ones, and indeed all the people and the Government of the United States. It is our duty as Members of this world body, which stands for global harmony, peace and security, to say "Never again" to such vileness. Zimbabwe lost two of its nationals in those tragic attacks.

As the people of the United States grapple with the threat posed by biological weapons of mass destruction in the form of anthrax, we in Zimbabwe, who have hitherto been the greatest victims of this weapon, know what it means and what they are going through. For during our own liberation struggle, anthrax was used as a weapon of mass destruction by the racist regime of Ian Smith. The anthrax was

developed by the apartheid regime in South Africa under the guidance of Dr. Basson, better known as "Dr. Death", who then supplied it to Ian Smith. Many Zimbabweans perished both before and after independence. The anthrax spores that were spread by the racist regime of Ian Smith during our liberation struggle more than 20 years ago continue to claim victims exclusively within the black population of our country to this day. More people and cattle have died of anthrax this year in Zimbabwe than elsewhere in the world. Thus not only are we vehemently opposed to this evil scourge and other forms of terrorism, but we also know the pain and loss associated with it.

In my address to the General Assembly at last year's session, I dwelt at length on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since that time, some progress has been made in implementing the ceasefire agreement in that country. All those involved in the process — the signatories to the ceasefire agreement and the United Nations Security Council — are agreed that conditions are favourable for the deployment of United Nations peacekeepers under phase III of the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). As a matter of fact, just yesterday, the Security Council adopted resolution 1376 (2001), supporting the launching of phase III deployment of MONUC. Nevertheless, the Security Council, by adopting what it calls a step-by-step approach, continues to show excessive caution or hesitancy, almost indistinguishable from lack of commitment or confidence, in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is the major threat to that peace process today.

I wish to renew our appeal to the Security Council to more strongly and convincingly demonstrate its support for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by providing adequate human, financial and other resources. In this context, we note that as of 30 September 2001, unpaid assessed contributions for MONUC to the Democratic Republic of the Congo special account amounted to $246.9 million. In addition, the trust fund established by the Secretary-General in October 1999 to support the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had, two years later, received only the paltry sum of $1.1 million.

The serious matter of inadequate resources was one of the major factors that contributed to the curtailment, both in number of participants and in duration, of the inter-Congolese dialogue in Addis Ababa last month. We welcome and appreciate South Africa's offer to host the next session of the national dialogue and meet some of the related expenses. We hasten to add, however, that South Africa must not be burdened and abandoned because of this generosity and willingness to contribute to the peacemaking efforts. We all must play our part in restoring peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and indeed to the Great Lakes region.

The continued unnecessary suffering and loss of life among the civilians in Angola are indefensible. Through the Sanctions Committee and other measures, we have determined that UNITA must be denied and deprived of the resources and means to continue to wage war against the Angolan people. It is time that we ensure that those sanctions are indeed effective by not only respecting that sanctions regime ourselves, but also exposing those who continue to aid and abet UNITA in its deadly activities.

The situation in the Middle East demands urgent action and resolution on the basis of the long-standing Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The question of a Palestinian State brooks no delay. Israel must bite the bullet and accept that until a Palestinian State becomes a reality, there can never be lasting peace in the Middle East.

I must express our concern over the lack of progress in the area of reforming the Security Council to make it more democratic and fully representative of the aspirations of a large section of the international community which has had a limited voice for far too long. It is our considered view that conflict resolution around the globe could be enhanced by a reformed and more representative Security Council.

On the eve of the Doha meeting, my delegation would like to stress that necessary measures must be taken to strengthen the ability of developing countries to be integrated in a beneficial way into the global system. The human and institutional capacities of developing countries must be strengthened, and more emphasis must be placed on enhancing the role of trade and development, with better access provided for goods and services from developing countries. Currently, we are experiencing a situation in which developing countries in general, and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries in particular, seem to lose through the

World Trade Organization arrangement the little that they had gained, even from previous protocols.

One of the most enduring features of the present and of the latter part of the last century has been the persistence of the colonial legacy in many developing countries. That legacy has been evident in relations between and within States. We need not recall much more evidence of the persistence of this phenomenon than the proceedings of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, barely two months ago.

The continued refusal on the part of some former colonial Powers to acknowledge the devastating effects that colonialism has had, and continues to have, on the economic development of most of the former colonies has also been much in evidence. It is no accident that it is those former colonies that today occupy the lower rungs of the development totem pole.

In Zimbabwe, the colonial legacy is poignantly evident in the racially skewed land-ownership structure, which is a direct result of racist policies and the laws of successive colonial regimes between 1890 and 1980. Over 70 per cent of the arable land — the best of that land — is owned and utilized by less than 1 per cent of the population, represented by approximately 4,100 white farmers, most of them of British descent, while nearly 13 million black Zimbabweans eke out a living from the remaining 30 per cent — the worst of the arable land. Such a situation has to be corrected in the interests of equity, justice, social harmony and political stability in the country and, indeed, in our region of southern Africa.

My Government has begun a land reform and redistribution programme, which, while ensuring that more people are settled on acquired land, will leave the current owners with only one farm each. At present, some of them own 18 farms each — and an average farm in Zimbabwe is 2,000 hectares. Some, like the Openheimer family, own land that is nearly the size of Belgium — one man owns property the size of Belgium in Zimbabwe. My Government's land reform programme guarantees that none of the white farmers will be left landless. Every existing white farmer who wants to farm is assured of getting one farm. The programme is not about total alienation or dispossession, but about equitable redistribution. What is more generous or equitable than that?

As to who should pay for compensation, we reached understandings and agreements with the former colonial master when we negotiated our independence at Lancaster House in 1979. Obligations to pay compensation were assumed by the former colonial Power. Provided that all parties honour their obligations, the so-called land crisis in Zimbabwe will evaporate overnight. That is the crisis in my country, to which the spokesman of the European Union referred from this rostrum. Zimbabwe has policemen in Kosovo, policemen in Sierra Leone and policemen in East Timor. We are trying to bring peace to the Congo. We do not have a crisis; we have a land dispute.

The lofty objectives of the United Nations Charter in the economic arena will remain unfulfilled unless all Member States join in efforts, genuinely and seriously, to redress inherited colonial imbalances that persist in developing countries. Social justice, political stability and sustainable development in Zimbabwe can be better achieved through genuine and committed support for land redistribution programmes than through the vilification or demonization of its leadership and policies.

It is most unfortunate that our efforts at rectifying unsustainable colonial imbalances are seen by some as a crisis; the real crisis lies in the persistence of that legacy. Zimbabweans are resolved to correct that colonial injustice, in spite of the outcry from some quarters by people who regard the defence of the present injustice as their historic responsibility. It is unacceptable that a minority, whether black or white, should own over 70 per cent of the best arable land in any country. That may be acceptable in some countries; in Zimbabwe, we have decided to say "No".

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has become a serious developmental issue. As the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization (A56/1) indicates, the pandemic is destroying the economic and social fabric in our countries. Zimbabwe's infection rate among the adult population is estimated to be 30 per cent, while hundreds of thousands of children have already been orphaned as a result of this dreaded disease. In the light of this, my Government and, indeed, those of other developing countries, will need all the assistance we can get to complement our own efforts. We look forward to having this issue be seriously addressed by the international community.

The international community should develop strategies to ensure that AIDS drugs developed by pharmaceutical companies become more affordable for developing countries. Let me extend my sincere thanks to the Secretary-General for convening the special session on HIV/AIDS in June this year. We hope that the implementation of the resolutions of that conference will go some way towards checking the spread of the disease.

In conclusion, let me assure one and all that Zimbabwe will partner all international efforts towards the eradication of terrorism in all its forms, as well as exert all its energy in combating the pestilences that afflict humanity, especially poverty and underdevelopment.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Honduras, His Excellency Mr. Roberto Flores Bermúdez.

Mr. Flores Bermúdez (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): At this juncture, when humanity is faced with various challenges, it is essential that the United Nations receive the broadest and most firm support as it plays the role of coordinator of our collective efforts.

The 2001 Nobel Peace Prize, awarded to the Secretary-General and to the United Nations as a whole, is a further reaffirmation of trust in this universal Organization, which was created to banish violence and to further human development. We warmly congratulate the Secretary-General and the officials and employees of the Organization.

The international turmoil brought about by the terrorist attack of 11 September against the people and the Government of the United States of America, as well as against the highest values of the civilized world, has radically altered the way in which we think about international security. Our own people are not immune from this new reality. Buried under the rubble of the World Trade Center are the remains of Hondurans who had come to this country to turn their hopes into reality. The President of the United States, in his statement this morning, referred to the many countries whose nationals perished in the twin towers. It is, indeed, an international phenomenon.

The Presidents of the Central American countries, at the invitation of the President of Honduras, Mr. Carlos Flores, met in Honduras on 19 September and adopted specific joint steps to be taken at the subregional level to combat terrorism. The purpose is to contribute, within our modest capacities, to that end, which is synonymous with the maintenance of international peace and security. Those steps include controls on migration and financial flows and intelligence sharing in the framework of the Organization of American States and the United Nations.

The Government of Honduras notes with deep concern the escalating violence in the Middle East. In the light of the circumstances at the time, we supported the establishment of the State of Israel. Today, we want to use this international forum, which plays a critical role in the search for a solution in the region, to reaffirm the right of Israel to exist as a sovereign, free and secure States. We also support recognition of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of a Palestinian State. We are convinced that that constitutes a suitable formula for real peace in the Middle East.

In his introductory remarks today, the Secretary-General expressed his grief and revulsion at the cowardly acts of international terrorism. He also wisely noted that none of the other problems before us has become any less urgent. In addition to terrorism, other grave dangers threaten peace and the well-being of individuals. Among them is HIV/AIDS, which was the focus of a special session of the General Assembly, held from 25 to 27 June 2001. That collective endeavour led to the establishment of a global HIV/AIDS and health fund to support joint measures against the pandemic. The special session raised the level of understanding of the scope of the pandemic, which goes beyond health, because it also has a social and economic impact.

The June session forged links of cooperation among nations with a view to sharing experience and solutions in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In particular, it is essential to reduce the cost of drugs: in Honduras, as in many other countries, most of the infected and their families cannot afford the necessary treatment. Brazil's agreements with pharmaceutical companies in this field are worthy of emulation. This should be a goal in dealing with diseases that hit the developing countries hardest.

In Honduras, we are encouraged by the fact that the rate at which the virus is spreading has slowed. Forecasts two years ago overestimated today's levels of

infection – although these continue to be high. The United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization is helping us to set up a regional AIDS prevention centre at San Pedro Sula to serve the entire Central American region.

Extreme poverty is another major threat to the peace and welfare of individuals. Here too, the United Nations deserves the support of the entire international community in helping overcome the causes of extreme poverty through strategic measures aimed at offering opportunities to sectors that are now excluded so that they can enjoy a decent life and be a productive part of their societies. That does not mean only vocational and technological training; ignoring the hardship caused by widespread illiteracy would amount to condemning 70 per cent of the world's population to wretchedness. The United Nations has come forward with valuable international initiatives.

For its part, Honduras has adopted a poverty reduction strategy in which education plays a fundamental role. This grew out of a national consensus which in turn holds the key to country's recovery and transformation in the aftermath of hurricane Mitch.

The United Nations must promote fundamental democratic freedoms, including participation and legitimate representation in decision-making processes. Here the Organization has played an ever-growing role in facilitating dialogue and promoting consensus. In recent years, Honduras has held a national dialogue in a variety of fields of vital importance for the nation's future. The results have been promising. In addition to formulating a national-reconstruction plan to overcome the unprecedented damage caused by hurricane Mitch three years ago, the Government of President Carlos Flores, in one of the broadest consultative processes in our history as a republic, has, together with our people, adopted a 15-year strategy for poverty reduction. That is the first plan of its kind, arrived at through a national consensus, to be adopted by my country.

Alleviating poverty, overcoming educational backwardness, responding to epidemics and reducing our vulnerability to natural phenomena: all are linked to economic output and to its intelligent distribution. We are thus aware that it is not only underpinnings in the form of programmes that are needed; fairness and justice in international trade are also required. To be consistent with the rhetoric of international trade, we need better access to major markets. Agricultural products of developed countries must no longer be so heavily subsidized, so that the products of those of us who are handicapped by our level of development can be more competitive in line with the principles of that rhetoric. What is good for some should be good for all. We need a level playing field that takes into account asymmetries and conditions on all sides.

Political maturity in Member States is intimately bound up with how well those States meet their international obligations. Peace, tranquillity, the ability to cooperate and interdependence are all intertwined with how seriously international relations are conducted. The much-quoted third paragraph of the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations says that we, the peoples of the United Nations, are determined

> "to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained".

Indeed, adherence to the principle of *pacta sunt servanda* and other sources of international obligations is a factor for building trust among States. Its absence poses a threat to the Organization's guiding spirit and to the principles that are its pillars.

The President of Mexico, His Excellency Mr. Vicente Fox, has invited the States of the Caribbean to attend a conference to promote the implementation of their commitments on maritime limits under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. As a State party to that Convention, my country supports the Mexican Government's initiative. Moreover, on a bilateral level, we are pursuing in good faith and in conformity with international law the early conclusion of treaties on maritime limits with our Caribbean Sea neighbours. We applaud the efforts now under way under a special process, sponsored by the Organization of American States, by our neighbours Belize and Guatemala towards a final solution to the century-long territorial dispute. Such a solution should include, to the extent possible and with the participation of the three States directly concerned — Belize, Guatemala and Honduras — the adoption of stable legal agreements on cooperation in the Gulf of Honduras.

Honduras believes that disputes are an integral part of inter-State relations. What is alarming is not that there should be differences between States; rather, it is the attitude with which they are approached.

Similarly, we note that domestic political concerns should not be allowed to interfere with shared interests in subregional integration. To allow our domestic political goals to affect our integration process would mean endangering the future of integration itself, and thus the future of the shared interests of the Central American countries.

We have a united Organization, all of whose various bodies and specialized agencies are working ever more closely together in pursuit of specific objectives. This is a time of extraordinary importance for the international community and hence for the United Nations and all of its Member States. Accordingly, we must work ever harder to promote the values of peace and human development that we all share. In this endeavour, all countries, small and large, must abide by the guidelines which we, the majority, have agreed upon in order to save our planet from climate change, whose damaging effects are making themselves felt everywhere.

At this juncture the Organization should continue and expand its leadership and allow all peaceful international players, including the Republic of China on Taiwan, to participate in the joint combat against the renewed threats to peace, security and the welfare of all nations. All of this applies to the international arena.

At the national level, organization at the local community level is essential in order to dispel uncertainty, overcome indifference and strengthen human solidarity based on reason. This was the case during the recent floods along the Atlantic coast of Honduras. As a result of the preparation and prevention programmes promoted by the Administration of President Flores, the loss of life was minimal, and emergency support services operated effectively and in a timely manner. This was because the local communities had learned how to prevent most of the damage caused by such natural phenomena.

The lesson is clear: at the national and international levels, we must try to organize our work as individuals and as countries and to coordinate those efforts in order to reduce our vulnerability in all areas, be they environmental, economic, political or security-related, on the basis of the principles of a culture of peace, which we have agreed upon together.

In a few months' time, President Flores will conclude his term of office. He will leave behind a stable country with transparency restored, the rule of law strengthened and a macroeconomic administration recognized by the international community — a country that has recorded positive economic growth despite having suffered the greatest natural disaster in our history.

I conclude this address — the last to be delivered by the present Government of Honduras in the General Assembly's general debate — by conveying the greetings and appreciation of the people of Honduras and of the Government of President Flores to the international community and to all of the peoples who have stood by us during the most difficult moments of our history. Those have included, as we will all recall, the terrible hurricane of 1998 and its negative consequences, which have affected us ever since. We Hondurans have renewed our faith in international solidarity and have grown stronger in our conviction that the destiny of our nation and of our planet hinges on what we are doing today to build a future for our nations.

The meeting rose at 7.20 p.m.